

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

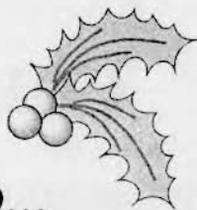
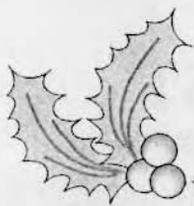
VOL. 56

No. 655

SEPTEMBER 2002



THE NO.149.
**SEXTON
BLAKE
LIBRARY**



WITH CHRISTMAS IN MIND...

I am sorry to have to announce that there will be no CD Annual this year.

The good news is that I have decided, instead, to produce a smaller volume, a **CHRISTMAS SPECIAL** – which, like our Annuals, will be full of good things but will be simpler to produce and considerably less expensive.

I hope that all CD readers will wish to buy this **CHRISTMAS SPECIAL** which will be ready early **DECEMBER**.

I have already received a great batch of articles for it from many of your favourite contributors. These items feature Greyfriars, Rookwood, Sexton Blake, Nelson Lee, Cliff House, Chums, The Wizard and the Girls' Crystal. And there is more!

An order form for this Christmas Special is enclosed with this issue of the Collector's Digest and it will be very helpful if you would be kind enough to send me your orders soon so that I can assess the number of copies to be printed.



STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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W.H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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HERBERT LECKENBY

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SAD FAREWELLS



By the time you receive this edition of the C.D. many of you will have heard the very sad news of the sudden passing of Darrell Swift, who was known and respected by collectors from all over the world. Darrell was a book-lover and book-dealer who went to endless trouble to find people's 'wants'. He was a pillar of the Northern Old Boys' Book Club, a popular visitor to the London club, the initiator of the William and Jennings Days and an active member of other book collecting circles. His passing is not only a tremendous loss to our hobby but a great and bitter personal loss. I shall never forget his friendship and warm humour. He was a truly good man who brought out the goodness in others.

Darrell collapsed at Kennedy Airport in New York, on the last leg of a trip visiting friends in Thailand, New Zealand, Australia and America. He died of a brain haemorrhage in the early hours of 2nd August. A recording of his funeral service and a Book of Remembrance are available, and details can be obtained from Geoff Tomlinson, 397 Otley Old Road, Leeds, LS16 7DF.

This issue of the C.D. carries several tributes to Darrell. These began to arrive almost as soon as I received news of his passing, and as you will see some come from friends in the U.K., and others from abroad. The photograph included here is of Darrell and was

taken by Jessie Hinrich at the Maidstone meeting in April to celebrate John Wernham's 40 years as President of the London OBBC.

A few weeks before Darrell died, we heard of the passing of another icon of our hobby, Gerald Campion - the actor who so brilliantly played the part of Billy Bunter in television productions and on the West End stage. On July 9th Gerald died in France, where he and his wife Sue had been living for some years. He was 81 years of age, and I met him two or three years ago, when we were both speakers at a Frank Richards event in Broadstairs. He was then very active and lively. Of course he had a fund of amusing anecdotes about the time when he was portraying Bunter, and I shall treasure the memory of meeting him. He and Sue were staying at the same hotel where Darrell Swift, Betty and Johnny Hopton, Una and Brian Hamilton Wright and I were



staying. It is ironically sad that within a few weeks of each other Betty, Gerald and Darrell have passed away.

Many tributes have been paid to Gerald Campion in the national press: our collecting circle will also mourn his passing. There will be a public memorial service for him at St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, London on November 7th at 12 noon.

It is always sad to hear that friends have died. Happily, however, our collecting interests bring us into contact with a wide range of what Eric Fayne once described as 'the nicest people in the world', and we can be grateful for the many friends, old and new, that our special interest has brought us.

MARY CADOGAN

NEW GREYFRIARS AUDIO CASSETTE FROM MARTIN JARVIS

(Reviewed by Mary Cadogan)

Billy Bunter and the Blue Mauritius

By
Frank
Richards



READ BY
MARTIN JARVIS

This latest Bunter book reading by Martin Jarvis is a joy to listen to. The story of Sir Hilton Popper's stolen Blue Mauritius Stamp is written with Frank Richards' usual panache and Martin makes the most of the lively dialogue and descriptive passages to carry the plot forward, as Bunter becomes, unwittingly, more and more involved in the nefarious happenings.

It is intriguing to hear how Martin interprets the characters, and the vintage humour of the relationships between them. He manages skilfully to differentiate the voices and personalities of many members of the Greyfriars Remove – and Mr. Quelch's "not loud but deep" voice is given full resonance. Great escapist listening!

The story unfolds in a 2-cassette pack, priced £9.99, which can be ordered from CSA TELL TAPES, 6a Archway Mews, London SW15 2PE. Tel: 020 8871 0220. The website address is: <http://www.csatelltapes.demon.co.uk>. Also they can be ordered through normal retail outlets.



SEXTON BLAKE AND THE SPORT OF KINGS

by Derek Hinrich

I have lived in Epsom for over thirty years but I have only been up to the Downs to see the racing twice. The first time, I saw three jockeys' caps above the heads of the crowd, and that was that year's Derby. Well, my wife and I had agreed that we should make the effort once; and that would have been that, except that I had the good fortune to win, in a raffle, two complimentary tickets for the Queen's Stand for this year's Epsom Spring Meeting.

The Epsom Spring Meeting was held on Wednesday 24th April and it was the sort of scorching day one would hope to have for the Derby Meeting (but not this year!). The going was good, the horses' coats were sleek and handsome, the jockeys' silks were passing brave; and we contrived to sit on the second floor balcony opposite the winning post and over the winner's enclosure. We had a very different view of that day's racing and my wife had one first, two seconds, and one third at the Tote out of six races. She won £8.70 and so was only £3.30 down on the day, not bad for a first-time punter!

When I got home I fell to wondering idly if Sexton Blake had been much involved with horseracing. I was vaguely conscious of having some titles, as yet unread, in my collection which referred to it. So I decided to see what *The Sexton Blake Index* could tell me on the subject. The answer was, "Quite a lot". I found that there were a number of titles and they all appeared to be in the second series of *The Union Jack* and in the various series of *The Sexton Blake Library*. I had several of these in my collection.

The very first one, however, was not. This appeared in the *UJ* in 1905 and was called "The Jockey Detective". This was by E J Gannon, one of those early authors who is no more than a name in Lofts and Adley's *The Men Behind Boys' Fiction*. Who the jockey detective was I don't know. Tinker was seventeen (the great and unhappy Fred Archer won his first race at thirteen) and Blake, although he could ride (he once chased Zenith the Albino in what was virtually a point to point), was surely too big a man, unless he "wasted himself with something like the poisonous concoction Fred Archer used before his last race, which led him to depression and suicide by shooting at twenty-nine".

This first racing story appeared at a time when the Blake saga had three staple forms of title which accounted for nearly three quarters of stories – "Sexton Blake in Somewhere"; "The (tradesman) Detective"; or "Sexton Blake – tradesman". There was one period of fourteen weeks about then in which nine *UJ* stories were called "The Something Detective".

After a short pause there followed in 1909-13 a spate of racing cases including three featuring Sexton Blake – Trainer; Sexton Blake – Bookmaker; and Sexton Blake – Tick-Tacker. So he clearly knew the underside of racing. About this time someone was “Warned Off” in the *UJ* (this happened again in a third series *SBL*) and another tale concerned that despicable creature, “The Welsher” (this was eventually reprinted with a new title in *Detective Weekly*)

All told, horseracing, either on the flat or “over the sticks”, played a part in at least fifteen stories in the *UJ* and at least twelve volumes of the *SBL*, with four novels in each of the first three series. I found that that *doyen* of master criminals, George Marsden Plummer was involved in no less than four cases and the criminality in another was provided by Professor Kew and Count Ivor Carlac. None of the other great serial villains apparently were interested in this branch of crime.

W J Bayfield wrote seven of the *UJ* stories and three of the *SBLs*; J W Bobin wrote one story for the *UJ* and three *SBLs*; and John Hunter all the four third series *SBLs*. William Murray Graydon wrote one *UJ* story and one *SBL*. T. Stenner wrote two *UJ* cases, his only Blake stories – but they were a notable pair: one on the Grand National and one on the Derby. The other four stories that I could find were all singletons by different authors, but I do not think this list is exhaustive.

The crimes apparently involved the complete range of racing villainy – fraud on the Tote, fraud on the St Leger, pulling horses, doping horses, nobbling horses and, of course,

THE CASE OF The **DOPED** FAVOURITE

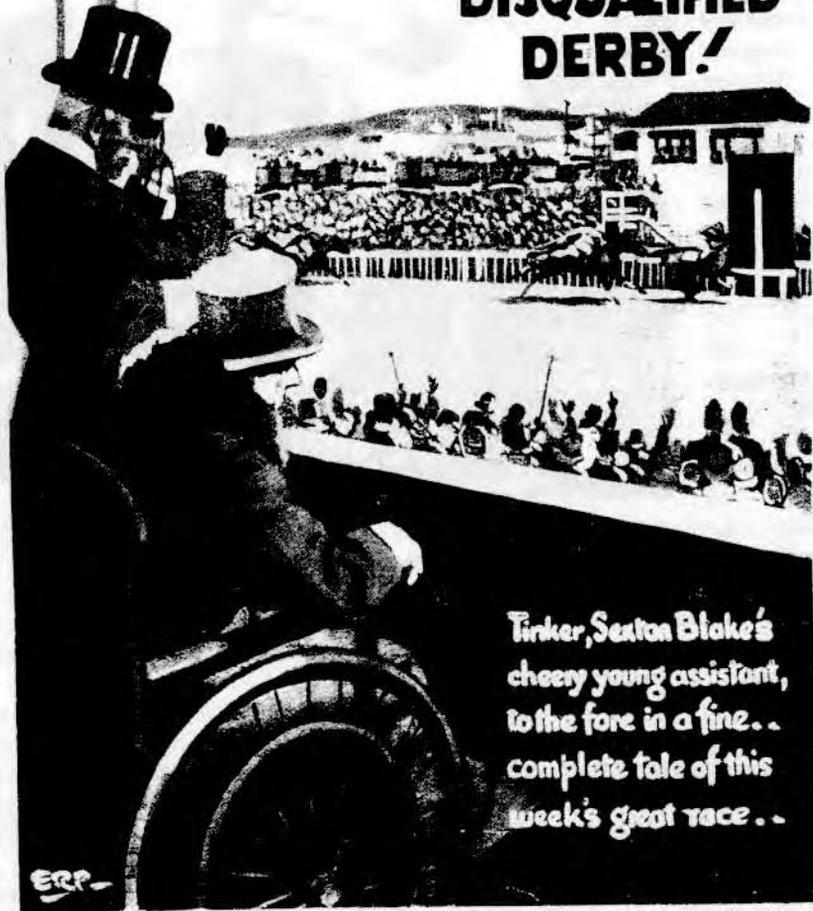
BY
JOHN
HUNTER



TOPICAL Sporting-Detective Story!

THE UNION JACK 2

**THE CASE OF THE
DISQUALIFIED
DERBY!**



*Tinker, Sexton Blake's
cheery young assistant,
to the fore in a fine...
complete tale of this
week's great race...*

ERP

No. 1,232.

EVERY THURSDAY.

May 28th, 1927.

ringing them. Sandown, Hurst Park, Doncaster, Aintree, Lingfield, York, and Epsom were the venues. Feeling parochial, I decided to look more closely at the Epsom cases.

A pattern soon emerged. For, just as those *femmes fatales* who so beset the Blake of 'the Golden Age' – Yvonne Cartier, Roxane Harfield, June Severance, and Olga Nasmyth, 'the Girl of Destiny' – all took to criminality as the only means open to them to avenge the ruin inflicted on their families by even worse criminals, so there was usually a trainer or owner (or both in one person) whose entire future depended on winning the Derby. Frequently a close member of that person's family – usually a parent – had already been "warned off" Newmarket Heath after a Stewards' Enquiry into some irregularity of which they were entirely innocent but for which, under the Jockey Club's Rules, they were deemed to be responsible. Sometimes it is hoped to win the Derby with a horse that has never been out before (like Shoscombe Prince in the Sherlock Holmes' story "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place", or as Merry Hampton did in fact in the 1887 Derby – which may have given Conan Doyle the idea for "Shoscombe Old Place").

This plot appeared quite early, for instance in *The Derby Winner* in *Union Jack* 2/398 of 1911. Here not only was the poor but honest trainer saved by Blake but a *deus ex machina* in the shape of His Majesty King George V heaped riches and further reward upon him by transferring the Royal Stud to his charge. (About this time story papers were making great demands of the monarch. That very same year he commanded the Home Fleet in a new Trafalgar in the Channel against the Combined Fleets of China and Japan for Captain Shaw in *Chums*, while the year before in another similar story by the same author, also in *Chums*, the then King, Edward VII, was shown, dressed as an Admiral of the Fleet and cutlass in hand, leading a boarding party of bluejackets in storming a tethered enemy airship.)

Meanwhile, race gangs flourishing razors and hammers in the best Darby Sabini tradition would be at work (one *SBL* was devoted to the affairs of *The Rival Race Gangs*). Crooked owners and bookmakers conspired. Honest bookmakers always were ready to have a word in season for Blake and Tinker. Touts and tipsters and nobblers hid in bushes, watching the strings at exercise, noting the horses' form or waiting their chance to strike. Many ingenious stratagems were deployed, including personation – ringing the owner rather than the horse – on one occasion (well the owner died just before the race and thousands were at stake) – and a transvestite dooper plied his/her nefarious trade successfully, for a while. But Blake and Tinker were always finally just in time in a thrilling last-minute denouement to thwart the villain's coup on Epsom Downs on Derby Day and help Inspector Courts clap the Derbies on.

Dick Francis these tales are not, but the best of those I read, by T R Stenner and John Hunter (*UJ2/1232, The Case of The Disqualified Derby* and *SBL3/263, The Case of The Doped Favourite* respectively), convey a very authentic-seeming sense of the Turf and of what used to be called "The Fancy" – the horsey, gambling, prize-fight following swells of the Regency and later. They certainly do not contain any of the implausibilities which Dr Watson would have us believe his friend Sherlock Holmes perpetrated in connection with the Wessex Plate at Winchester Races after he recovered *Silver Blaze*. Really, the good doctor should have known better, since he assures us elsewhere that he spent half his pension on the Turf.



THE STOWAWAY'S QUEST by Mark Caldicott

"The Stowaway's Quest", which first appeared as a serial in *The Boy's Herald* (415-425, in 1911), is among the first of Brooks' Amalgamated Press stories. It may be recalled from my previous series of articles ("The Iron in the Soul") that between November 1910 and June 1911 all Brooks' energy was devoted to maintaining the *Iron Island* and *Brotherhood of Iron* serials in *The Gem*. I would suggest, therefore, that since "The Stowaway's Quest" appeared during this period it must have already been written before November 1910. This makes it certainly the first Brooks long story accepted for publication. What is remarkable, therefore, is that for such an early effort it is such a competent, confident and entertaining yarn.

Admittedly the opening scenes do read rather in the melodramatic style of a Victorian novel. Harry Bedford is a poor (but virtuous and hard-working) young lad leading an unhappy life at the hands of a cruel and unloving mother. Living in a seaport, he decides to run away to sea.

Harry has an aim in mind – to seek his father who also gone to sea and, he believes, is living in Java. He seeks work as a cabin boy, but is unable to find work and is considering his next move when he hears a cry of pain. Investigating, he rescues a boy from the clutches of a drunken man. The boy declares himself to be the cabin boy of a disreputable old windjammer, the *Celebes*, due to sail to...you guessed it... Java. Harry decides to smuggle himself aboard and, having done so, manages to hide himself among the cargo.

From his hiding place he overhears a conversation between the captain, Captain Kellett, and Mr Kennard, a passenger. They discuss someone called James Hendon who must be "put out of the way, otherwise when he heard of our visit to the island he'd smell a rat, and demand his share." This is Harry's first inkling that the ship is not just an honest trading ship.

Harry is discovered when the hold is opened for Kennard and Captain Gillett to examine some of the packing cases housed there. Harry had hoped that once discovered he would be accepted and be allowed to work his passage. This is a forlorn hope, however, since the furious captain plans to throw Harry overboard. Harry, incensed by this injustice, strikes out with his fists and knocks down the bullying captain, but Gillett is too strong and in the ensuing struggle Harry is indeed thrown overboard to disappear in the ship's wake.

Billy Mitchell, the ship's cabin boy whom Harry had rescued from the drunken attack, recognises Harry, sees that he is in trouble and dives overboard to help him. Captain Gillett is forced by Kennard to lower the boat and bring the pair back on board.

Harry is allowed to work his passage, but is given the hardest and dirtiest work from morning till night.

Some days later the Celebes is hit by a storm. When the storm abates, the ship collides with wreckage of a less fortunate vessel. Floating on a piece of this wreckage is a single survivor. He is brought aboard the Celebes barely alive. Captain Gillett, motivated only by curiosity about the man and his ship, allows the survivor to be taken to a cabin and Harry is given the task of looking after him. The man recovers slowly, revealing his name as Robert Stanton, a passenger from a ship bound from Java to Southampton. He soon has the measure of Captain Gillett, and takes an immediate liking to Harry. The two become firm friends.

Harry, describing the crew of the ship and his suspicions that it is manned by rogues, mentions that the owner, Martin Kennard, is aboard the vessel. At the mention of this name Robert Stanton declares his amazement at the coincidence, but will not explain any further. However, when Harry is bullied by the drunken captain and is rescued from a cruel beating by Stanton, Stanton confides that he agrees with Harry's opinion of the captain. Stanton goes on to say:

"During the weeks I have been aboard this ship I've kept my eyes open, and I'm beginning to think that Hendon was mistaken..."

Harry is amazed to hear Stanton speak of Hendon, the man whose life Harry has heard threatened by Kennard and Gillett. He tells Stanton what he has heard and Stanton responds by taking Harry into his confidence, telling him that the significance of Harry's story is that Kennard is planning to rob Hendon of his share of diamonds. Before he can go into detail, however, Captain Gillett, eavesdropping to the conversation, bursts in and sends Harry back to work. Kennard and the captain plan to throw Harry and Stanton overboard but Stanton, guessing Gillett has heard their conversation, forestalls this by managing to lower a boat and escape with Harry and Billy, the cabin boy. Chased by the captain and Kennard in another boat they escape, only to be threatened with destruction by a storm.

Here their luck changes. They are rescued by *The Arrow*, a magnificent hydroplane of tremendous speed, which picks them up and outpaces the storm. This wonder craft is owned by Australian millionaire Rufus Crang. Crang is Brooks' first millionaire adventurer, obviously the forerunner of the popular *Nelson Lee Library* character. Lord Dorriemore.

Crang offers to accompany them to Batavia, in Java, which is Stanton's destination now that he knows the real nature of Kennard. Arriving in Batavia, Stanton takes Crang, and incidentally Harry and Billy, into his confidence.

James Hendon, says Stanton, came from Australia on the same ship as Kennard. This ship was wrecked by a storm and Hendon and Kennard were washed up on a small island where primitive Malay tribesmen befriended them. They made their home in a cave which, they discovered, was lined with diamonds. For nine months they were marooned on the island but then Kennard, having over-indulged in the natives' brew, became violent and destroyed one of the sacred effigies. The natives were set to murder the white men, who just managed to escape in a native boat. They were fortunate to be picked up by a Java-bound ship. Kennard was required in England and needed to depart before plans could be made to revisit the island, which they have named Mangrove Island. Hendon promised to

wait for his return and had kept that promise for six years, becoming in the meanwhile a successful sugar planter. Stanton, who had become his friend, was travelling to England and had agreed to look up Kennard to find out why he had not returned. Providence had brought Stanton to the Celebes and the discovery that Kennard was in fact on his way back to Java to kill Hendon and get the diamonds for himself.

Stanton goes to Hendon's plantation to warn him of the danger, only to find him in bed recovering from a riding accident. Because he is not yet fit to travel, the plan is to wait until the *Celebes* arrives, and have Kennard and Captain Gillett arrested and thrown into prison. They could then set off on their treasure hunt unhindered.

The plan goes adrift through the simple fact that Kennard has decided to sail straight to Mangrove Island. Eventually Stanton learns from another ship that *Celebes* has been seen heading in a different direction and, having guessed the reason, accepts Rufus Crang's offer to take them, including the injured Hendon, to the island in his wonder craft. They hope to beat the *Celebes* to Mangrove Island, but are thwarted when a flying fish leaps into the propeller and shatters it. Before they can fit the auxiliary propeller a storm overtakes them and they are driven aground on an island not far from Mangrove Island. Stanton, Kennard and Crang are exploring the island when they are seized by hostile natives. Harry and Billy witness this from the stranded *Arrow* and follow them. The prisoners are placed in a building at the edge of the village. The building is already inhabited by a Malay boy, Yassim Bakar, who is also being held prisoner.

Harry and Billy manage to move unseen to the building and remove the bar holding the door closed. The prisoners, including Yassim, escape with the natives hard at their heels and follow the river to the shore where, Yassim tells them, they will find the islanders' boats. They escape in a sampan and are chased by the native canoes who are only defeated after a tremendous battle.

The sampans sails carry them out to sea and towards Mangrove Island, but on approaching they discover that the *Celebes* is ahead of them, making for the island. To beat Kennard to the diamond cave, Hendon leads the party through the difficult shorter route through the mangrove swamps. They are spotted by a native whom Yassim follows to find out where the natives are. The party are thus forewarned of an impending ambush and are making plans to overcome the obstacle when they hear shooting. It is obvious that Kennard's party has stumbled into the very ambush which has been laid for Hendon and Co.

Billy is delighted that Kennard's evil company has fallen into the hands of the native islanders, but obviously he is only a poor Cockney and therefore cannot be expected to know how gentlemen behave.

"You appear to be hugely pleased over the occurrence. Billy," said Hendon, turning to the cabin boy.

"Rather, sir! Serves the rotters right!"

"That's all very well, young 'un," put in Rufus Crang, in his quiet, even tones; "but we can't see them killed by these savages. Although they are our enemies, they are, nevertheless, white men, and it would be dastardly to leave them in the lurch."

The problem faced by Strang and the others, though, is to rescue Kennard's company without actually revealing to Kennard their presence on the island. The plan they devise is to send Yassim to release Kennard and co while Strang and the others create a diversion

to attract the natives away from Yassim and Kennard. Yassim cuts Kennard and Co. free and meanwhile Hendon starts a fire to draw the attention of the natives. Once the fire is established Hendon and the others make rapidly for the cave of diamonds. Unfortunately so does the liberated Kennard, with the result that Kennard sees that Hendon's party has arrived at the cave.

Billy Mitchell is seized by Kennard and Gillett while the others are sleeping. They manage to get hold of the diamonds which Strang and Hendon have collected from the cave floor. To make matters worse, Kennard and Co manage to escape leaving Hendon's party to face the natives. In the ensuing fight, Hendon receives a wound from a native kriss. Thinking he is dying, Hendon confesses to Harry that his real name is Henry Bedford. Harry realises that Hendon is his father, the very person he has come to Java to find. The natives have retreated to investigate gunfire heard outside the cave and Crang, having some medical knowledge, is able to examine Hendon's wound. He pronounces that it will not prove fatal. Hendon fills in the details of his past, recounting how he was found guilty of forgery, a crime of which he was innocent. He was serving a ten-year sentence when he met Kennard with whom he managed to escape to Java, ending up on Mangrove Island. Crang recognises the forgery case and explains that the real culprit had been discovered some years earlier, so that unknown to Hendon, his innocence had already been established in his absence.

In a brave and selfless act, Crang sets out alone to recover the hydroplane, patiently making his way across the island to the sampan. He is able to sail across to The Arrow, effect the repairs and sail back to the diamond island. On his return to the cave, he meets Yassim. Crang creates a makeshift bomb from some cartridges and Yassim uses this as a diversion to allow the others to escape from the cave to make their way to The Arrow. Their escape from the natives is a narrow one, but The Arrow finally carries the party away to safety. They are lamenting their failure to recover the diamonds when they happen across the Celebes drifting and apparently deserted. They board the vessel and after a brief struggle with the remaining crew discover that both Kennard and Gillett have been murdered during a mutiny. Hendon and Co are therefore about to recover the diamonds after all.

Harry is delighted to be reunited with his father and, when news arrives that his uncaring mother has been killed in an accident, he decides to stay in Java. Stanton and Crang go their own way again, but Billy is found a place with Harry in Hendon's plantation.

This story, originally a serial, was republished as a complete story in *Boy's Friend Library* (1st series, 200, October 1917). The *Boy's Friend* publication is notable for the fact that it carries a splendid cover illustration. This particular edition is bound by the short side so that it is printed in "landscape" mode. I am not certain whether this was done to accommodate the orientation of the cover illustration or whether it was common to other editions at that time. If it was a one-off "landscape" publication then those collectors who wished to have bound editions of the series must have torn their hair at this oddity.

The story itself, republished in this format, it is quite at home in the *Boy's Friend* series, holding its own with the best that appeared. One can only be impressed once again by the fact that this was one of Brooks' first efforts. To reach this level of ability with almost his first effort demonstrates that he was indeed a naturally gifted storyteller.

BOOK REVIEW

by Brian Doyle

***A Treasury of Enid Blyton's School Stories*, compiled by Mary Cadogan and Norman Wright. Hodder Children's Books, London, £19.99.**

Many of us will delight in this magnificent new book called 'A Treasury of Enid Blyton's School Stories', compiled by two people who need no introduction to readers of the 'Story Paper Collectors' Digest': Mary Cadogan (its editor, of course) and Norman Wright.

Three years ago I had the pleasure of welcoming their *Treasury of Enid Blyton's Adventure Stories* and this new volume is in the same format – a sumptuously-produced 'annual-sized' book of 276 pages with nearly 100 illustrations, both black-and-white and colour (many 'coloured-up' from the original black and white ones from the books published in the 1940s and '50s, plus several photographs).

The Treasury comprises lengthy extracts from Enid Blyton's St. Clare's, Malory towers and Whyteleafe school novels, plus her 'one-off' complete novel *Mischief at St. Rollo's* and seven short stories in the genre: one is her only boys' boarding-school story set at West Dunnett School, where the leading character is named Richards (Alan, not Frank!). There are also some short day-school boys' adventures.

There is also a Foreword by Anne Fine, the current Children's Laureate, and a short Introduction dealing with Blyton's own childhood and schooldays, which were spent mainly at St. Christopher's, Beckenham, Kent (where she became Head Girl, tennis champion and Captain of the Lacrosse team). She subsequently worked as a junior teacher at a small boys' preparatory school in Bickley, Kent.

Blyton once said that her characters at St. Clare's, Malory Towers and Whyteleafe were made up of a mixture of all the schools she had known – 'a bit of one, a piece of another, a chip of a third.' It seems that she based some of her fictional characters and happenings upon actual girls, teachers and events at St. Christopher's (if so, what an



Illustration by Stanley Lloyd for the story "Well, My Father says..."

exciting and ripping place it must have been!). 'Claudine' of *Claudine at St. Clare's*, for instance, was a real girl, a Belgian schoolmate of Blyton's 'who was extra-naughty, very daring, not at all truthful and hated games', as she later put it. 'Mam'zelle', the much put-upon French mistress at St. Clare's, was based on one of Blyton's French teachers at St. Christopher's.

Darrell Rivers, perhaps the most memorable of Blyton's schoolgirl heroines, was based upon herself! Nice but quick-tempered Darrell went all through the six Malory Towers books, rising from the First Form to the Sixth. Her name derived from Blyton's second husband, Darrell Waters.

Enid Blyton wrote 16 school novels, centred on Whyteleaf, St. Clare's and Malory Towers, all published between 1940 and 1951. They included a 'one-off' book, *Mischief at St. Rollo's* (1943); aimed at a slightly younger readership, it featured like Whyteleaf, a co-educational school.

For the record, the six St. Clare's books were published between 1941 and 1945, the six Malory Towers novels appeared between 1946 and 1951, and the three Whyteleaf books (featuring *The Naughtiest Girl in the School*) between 1940 and 1945. (There was also one 'extra' short story, *Here's the Naughtiest Girl* which appeared in the 1952 *Enid Blyton Omnibus*.) All are represented in this book, with the exception for some unexplained reason, of *Last Term at Malory Towers* (1951) which seems a pity. Surely all the schoolgirl stories should have been represented, especially the final book in the 'Malory Towers' series since, apart from anything else, it presumably 'wrapped things up, marking, as it did, the end of that particular saga.

Malory Towers, probably the best-known of Enid-Blyton's fictional schools, is set amidst spectacular scenery in Cornwall, with its own swimming-pool cut out, if you please, of the natural rugged coastal rocks (not heated, presumably, in the winter), with magnificent sea-views. St. Clare's was named after a 13th century nun of that name, though it is not a convent school. Among the leading characters are the O'Sullivan Twins (Pat and Isabel) and the never-to-be-forgotten Carlotta Brown – the hot-tempered, dark-eyed, wild-haired, half-Spanish, ex-circus girl (from Mr. Galliano's enterprise, no doubt) with gypsy blood in her veins (a typically-English public school girl then).

Whyteleaf is the setting for *The Naughtiest Girl in the School* stories featuring the eponymous anti-heroine, Elizabeth Allen, who, it seems, has a problem. A problem of 'attitude' as they might say today.

'I'm going to be as bad and naughty and horrid as I can possibly be, so there! I don't want to go to school. I hate Whyteleaf School! I'll be so bad that you'll send me home next week!' Why doesn't this shy and quiet girl really say what she thinks? Earlier, she has refused to share her 'tuck' with the other girls. 'I'm not going to share – I shall eat them all myself!' 'Well,' says nice Nora (her merry face suddenly very disgusted) 'If they're as horrid as you seem to be, nobody would want to eat them!'

'She was a vixen when she went to school,

And though she be but little, she is fierce.'

as Shakespeare remarked in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

But, being a good gardener and an excellent pianist as well as a tomboy, Elizabeth isn't all bad and she later (much later) decides to be good (though she remains 'hot-tempered' – all the best Blyton girls are 'hot-tempered').

The first 'Naughtiest Girl' book was originally serialised in Enid Blyton's popular *Sunny Stories* magazine (from March to August, 1940, over 24 issues). Whyteleafe, by the way, was a co-educational, radical boarding-school, where the pupils and not the teachers made all the decisions, which sounds rather irresponsible to me – surely boys and girls in their mid-'teens lack the necessary experience and 'know-how' to make important decisions concerning the often serious business of running a large school and dealing with its pupils' problems and worries. But there you are. These books were written not long after the controversial A.S. Neill's pioneering and unorthodox educational methods, and Blyton, a regular contributor to such magazines as 'Teachers' World' possibly approved of these.

Mary Cadogan and Norman Wright have selected the various extracts and stories very well and older readers who read the originals many years ago will sigh with pleasurable nostalgia as they are reunited with old friends, while young readers will blissfully enjoy meeting all these characters for the first time.

The stories, being by Enid Blyton, are simply but well told and hold the interest throughout. There are all the favourite Blyton words, such as 'horrid', 'dreadful', 'heaps', 'jolly' and 'silly' cropping up regularly, and exclamation marks cover the pages like confetti. But it's all jolly good fun and after reading a few extracts you feel as though you've made lots of nice, lively new friends, with nothing too horrid really to worry about.

Some of the girls' names are almost Dickensian: there is Alma Pudden (a Billy Bunter equivalent), the snobbish Honourable Angela Favorleigh, Amanda Chartelowe and Zerelda Brass. There are also some strangely dated names – would youngsters in the 1940s really be called Gladys, Elsie or Doris? But never fear, all the more usual ones are present: Sally, Lucy, Janet, Jane, Kathleen, Pamela and Belinda. Never an Enid, though...!

The close-on 100 pictures are terrific too. Original illustrations by such artists as W. Lindsay Cable (a woman, in case you wondered) are well-represented. She actually illustrated at least two Angela Brazil novels, as well as many other children's books in the 1930s and 1940s, also contributing regularly to 'Little Folks' magazine. Jenny Chapple, Stanley Lloyd and the superb Stuart Tresilian (who also illustrated Blyton's wonderful



*Illustration by W. Lindsay Cable for
Summer Term at St. Clare's*

'Adventure' series of novels, plus much else) are there too, in both colour and black-and-white.

There is always something 'going on' in these busy school yarns too. Practical jokes abound, of course, and there is a particular nasty example when the Fourth Formers let off a series of lethal 'stink-balls' in the classroom, driving poor Mam'zelle, the French teacher, to near-distraction. This is one occasion when certain girls are rather more representative of St. Trinian's than of St. Clare's...

Generations of girls will surely welcome 'A Treasury of Enid Blyton's School Stories' and thank Cadogan and Wright for their devoted and scholastic endeavours. Millions of readers, past and present, dreamed of becoming pupils at Malory Towers, St. Clare's or Whyteleafe, just as millions of boys longed to attend and be part of Greyfriars, St. Jim's or Rookwood.

Sentiment creeps into the stories now and again (and why not?). The O'Sullivan Twins are departing on their train at the end of their first term: "They were off! The twins craned their heads out of the window to see the last of the big white building they had grown to love. 'Goodbye!' sighed Pat under her breath. 'We hated you when we first saw you, St. Clare's! But now we love you!'"

Schooldays the happiest days of your life? They certainly are here...

This 'Treasury' is a book to treasure...

THE YOUNG FRANK RICHARDS IN FACT AND FICTION

by Keith Atkinson

Part 2

Obviously it would not be possible in the course of a short article to examine all the stories in a series which must have run for over four years, even if I possessed them all. I do have all the *Gem* reprint series and a volume of original *Boy's Friends* which contains part of the series, but this probably amounts to less than half the total number of stories.

There is a series where Mr. Slimmey is held captive and impersonated by his rascally brother, and a series in which Vere Beauclerc's father backslides into roguery, and the usual snow-covered Christmas story, all fresh and unique in their Canadian setting. There are stories involving Chunky Todgers, the requisite fat boy of Cedar Creek, who has an irresistible weakness for maple sugar, and stories about Yen Chin the wily Chinese boy. Also stories of a flood and rescue, stories of rustlers, a mystery master, a runaway air balloon, and many others including a haunted goldmine and a barring out, all written with Frank Richards' inimitable flair.

This brings us up to the end of the series of reprints in *The Gem* in October, 1939. The blurb at the end of the story says:-

"Well, we say *au revoir* to the Cedar Creek chums for a while. Next week you will meet new pals – Biggles & Co. – in a thrilling adventure", thus leaving the way open for a continuation of the stories. Sadly this was not to be as, two months later, *The Gem* ceased publication altogether.

My other run of Cedar Creek stories is in *The Boy's Friend* from August 1920 to January 1921. By this time, of course, Frank Richards is well past the tenderfoot stage, and can ride and shoot, lasso and herd cattle as well as his Canadian cousin.

A Story of Frank Richards' Schooldays.

THE CEDAR CREEK VENTRILOQUIST!

By Martin Clifford



In this series the boys defeat the attempts of Gunten's father to take over the property of Mr. Hopkins, the father of Harold Hopkins, the Cockney schoolboy. A boastful American schoolboy named Honk is introduced, created somewhat on the same lines as Fisher T. Fish of Greyfriars, and who is quickly cut down to size. This is followed by a short series in which Frank Richards & Co. and Dicky Bird & Co. of Hillcrest School try to wreck each other's rival performances of 'Julius Caesar', though this hardly seems suitable fare for an audience of cowboys.

Then follows a long series involving cattle raiding, which is almost unknown in the peaceful Thompson Valley, by Handsome Alf and his gang from over the border. Frank and Bob and Vere Beauclerc have many hair-raising adventures when tracking the thieves into the mountains, including being trapped in a cave, the mouth of which has been blown up, and making a perilous escape down an underground river. Most of the gang are killed or captured but Handsome Alf escapes by a trick with two of his gang. His two companions are killed, but Handsome Alf captures Bob and Frank and binds them, lying face upwards, to the backs of their horses, and leaves them to wander helplessly in the mountains until they should die of starvation and exposure. Bob is found and saved by his father, and they capture and kill Handsome Alf, but Frank is only found and saved at the very last moment after great suffering.

Later comes a tale called *Frank Richards' Christmas Story*, and here once again we are introduced to Frank as an author.

The story opens at the Lawless ranch in the Christmas holidays, with Frank Richards seated at a table before an ancient and battered typewriter lent to him by Mr. Penrose, the editor and proprietor of the local newspaper called, ironically enough, the 'Thompson Press'. He is in the throes of composition, but so far has only succeeded in writing the title, *Bullivant's Christmas*, and the rest of the paper remains a beautiful blank, when he is interrupted by the arrival of Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc who, together with Chunky

Todgers have come to persuade him to go to the dance being held at the Mission. Frank is very reluctant to go as his 'copy' is due that evening if possible, but he eventually agrees.

Chunky Todgers, who fancies himself as an author, feigns illness and remains behind with the idea of writing the story himself and sending it in Frank Richards' name, although Mr. Penrose has scathingly rejected previous efforts from him. This he does and bribes the Chinese servant to take it to the newspaper office for him, and then falls asleep in front of the fire.

Meanwhile, at the Mission:-

"Frank Richards & Co. enjoyed themselves. Dances were few and far between in the Thompson Valley. Frank was rather in request, being a good dancer. He danced with pretty Molly Lawrence, and several other of the Cedar Creek girls. But Frank was not thinking wholly of dancing.

The Christmas Number of the *Thompson Press* haunted his thoughts.

He felt guilty.

Mr. Penrose relied on him for the copy, and the copy was due at the office. And the idea for his story having come to him, it was rather like a burden on his mind until the story was written and done with.

He was feeling more like scribbling than dancing that evening, and although his face was cheerful and bright, he would have given a great deal to be sitting at the typewriter in his room at the ranch.

Early in the evening Frank Richards vanished from the sight of his chums.

There were several enquiries for him but he did not reappear.

After the first half-dozen dances, Frank felt that he had done his duty, and he had quietly slipped away.

He spoke a few words to Mr. Smiley, who nodded and smiled, and then made his way into the reverend gentleman's house, which adjoined the pine-wood mission-hall.

In Mr. Smiley's study was a typewriter, which Frank had sometimes used, doing typing for the reverend gentleman occasionally.

Frank turned up the lamp and sat down at the machine.

While his chums were wondering what had happened to him, Frank Richards was busy.

The strains of music came to his ears from the distance, but he did not heed them, in fact he hardly heard them.

Neither did he hear nor heed the sounds of the dancers as they 'tripped the light, fantastic toe'.

Time and space had vanished for him, as he sat at the machine, clicking cheerily away on the keys.

Nothing short of an earthquake would have brought him back just then from the realms of imagination, where his fertile fancy was wandering.

He was no longer Frank Richards of the Backwoods School; he was living what he wrote' his spirit was in the typewriter, weaving sentence after sentence, page after page – more real to him than his actual surroundings."

Here speaks the real Frank Richards, and in his autobiography he tells us that once, in southern Italy, he actually did write through an earth tremor without noticing it, having been – so to speak – at Greyfriars at the time.

Frank goes back to the dance and to supper afterwards and then gets Tom Lawrence to drop the manuscript off at the 'Thompson Press' on his way home.

Next day he is astounded to receive a package at the ranch, containing a bundle of manuscript and a letter which reads:-

"Dear Richards, - I received your manuscript *Bullivant's Christmas* which you sent by young Lawrence. Many thanks for the same, and thanks for sending it in good time.

But what the thunder do you mean by sending another story with the same title by the Chinaman last night? And what the thunder do you mean by scribbling such idiotic rot?

If you're taking to drink at your age, I guess I'd better speak to your uncle about it. If you're not, what the thunder do you mean?

I enclose the stuff the Chinaman brought; no use to me. Put it in the fire.
Yours - J. Penrose."

I have the feeling that here Frank Richards is expressing his own feelings about substitute authors writing stories in his name, though whether the editor of *The Boys' Friend* realised this I do not know.

Chunky Todgers is unaware that Frank has submitted a story and is thunderstruck when he sees Frank's own story in the paper.

This story is followed by *The Cedar Creek Pantomime*, another tale in which Dicky Bird & Co. of Hillcrest School unsuccessfully try to wreck the Cedar Creek thespians' efforts, and my volume concludes with a pair of stories in which Mr. Penrose of the *Thompson Press*, to which Frank Richards supplies a weekly short story, and who is a little too fond of his drink thus getting into debt, tries to increase the circulation of his paper by running a crooked competition, offering a prize of a thousand dollars for the answer to a riddle. He tries to get Frank to join him in the swindle by pretending that he is the winner of the first correct entry opened. Frank indignantly refuses but Yen Chin, the

THE CEDAR CREEK PANTOMIME

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD



In the days of his youth Frank Richards, famous author of the Greyfriars stories, went to school in British Columbia. Here is a cheery story of his schooldays at Cedar Creek, told by his old friend and colleague, Martin Clifford.

Chinese boy, agrees to take part for a payment of ten dollars, and is declared the winner. He then changes his plan and comes round to claim the prize which, of course, Mr. Penrose cannot pay. His scheme is exposed and he is chased out of town by an angry mob.



Prince Charming had hold of the Great Huge Bear's head, and suddenly it came off. As a flushed face was revealed, the mystery was explained. "Dicky Bird!" yelled Frank Richards.

The blurb at the end of the story reads:-

"Be sure you read *Frank Richards & Co - Newspaper Proprietors*, a topping tale of the chums of Cedar Creek in next Monday's *Boys' Friend*."

I do not possess this story, but it seems rather ironic that the boys should take over a newspaper called the *Thompson Press* when it was the publications of D.C. Thomson & Co. that eventually outlived and to some extent took over from the Amalgamated Press papers. It was only a few months after this story was published that the first of the Thomson *Big Five* arrived on the scene with the publication of No. 1 of the *Adventure* in September 1921, although it was to be another twenty years before the *Magnet* and *Gem* ceased publication, and the 'golden years' of the *Magnet* were still to come.

I had written the above some months ago in order to give it as a talk to the Northern Club in January and at the time I did not know how the Cedar Creek series ended, but just before Christmas I obtained two further volumes of *The Boys' Friend* each containing many more stories of Cedar Creek, though these volumes are very hit and miss, with long gaps in between stories, and I have not yet had time to read them, but many of them appear to be the originals of stories which were reprinted in the *Gem*.

Fortunately however, I find that the second volume contains the final two stories in the Cedar Creek saga, in July 1921, so now I do know how the series ended.

The penultimate story is entitled *Back to Cedar Creek* and is evidently the last in a series in which Frank is under suspicion of stealing money from Miss Meadows' desk. The sum of 110 dollars is missing and the ten-dollar note is found on Frank although he has no idea how it got there.

Unable to clear himself, and not wishing to stay at the school with a shadow over him, he has left Cedar Creek and the Lawless ranch and wandered around gold prospecting etc. until such time as he can clear his name.

In the meantime two more thefts have occurred at the school and it is obvious that Frank could not be responsible for them, and that the thief is probably also responsible for the theft of which Frank is accused.

Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc go in search of Frank and finally catch up with him and persuade him to return to Cedar Creek.

At the ranch Bob's father shakes hands with him and begs his pardon for doubting him. At the school however, Miss Meadows is not wholly satisfied, although she is willing to give Frank the benefit of the doubt. Frank replies that he is not happy to return to Cedar Creek on these terms, "But I want to come," he says, "because I think that I may be able to find out the guilty party. If I do not succeed in this I shall not remain at Cedar Creek. I cannot stay here with a stain on my name. But I hope that I shall be successful."

Next day Frank is greeted by Yen Chin in a friendly manner, who tries to borrow fifty dollars from him, saying that his father's laundry business is being sold up, but Bob Lawless intervenes and tells Frank that Yen Chin is lying and that his father's business is flourishing.

"My hat! You awful young rogue!" exclaimed Frank indignantly.

Yen Chin jerked away his pigtail and backed off grinning.

"Yah! Pullee sillee ole Flanky's leg!" he jeered. "Flanky velly softee ole ass! Yah!"

And with that grateful remark Yen Chin scuttled away before Frank Richards' boot could reach him.

Bob laughed as he caught the expression on Frank's face.

"I guess you'd better shove your dollars in the bank, old scout," he said. "Somebody will have them off you before you're much older if you don't."

Frank coloured and then laughed.

"Ass! he replied. "Of course if old John Chin really was being sold up --"

"No business of yours if he was!" grunted Bob. "You'll never make a rich man, Frank, if you make everybody's troubles your own, as you usually do."

"Well, I don't know that I specially want to be rich," said Frank with a smile. "I know you think I'm too easy going, Bob. But after all I have a lot of luck that other fellows don't have. I've seen Mr. Isaacs, and he wants me to take up my stories again for the *Thompson Press*. That's going to be ten dollars a week for me."

"Lot of good for you if you give it away as fast as you get it!" grunted Bob. "I reckon I'd better get Mr. Isaacs to pay it to me, and mind it for you till you grow to years of discretion, if you ever do."

This again is true to life. In the 2001 C.D. Annual Una Hamilton Wright tells us:-

"Charles' instinct with his newfound wealth was to buy presents for members of his family who were duly weighed down with bicycles, a sewing machine, clocks, watches and jewellery ... Without realising it, he was slipping into the position of being family provider ... However Charles had now settled into one of his aims in life; to make money not only to be independent, but to be able to look after people."

Bob tells Frank that Yen Chin has been gambling again and Frank becomes suspicious of him, and thinks that he may be the thief. He sets a trap for him by putting two one hundred dollar notes in his desk, taking care to mention the fact in Yen Chin's

hearing. The notes have been signed on the back by his uncle, Mr. Lawless, and can be easily identified.

The notes are taken and one is found in Yen Chin's possession. The other is found in Beauclerc's desk where Yen Chin admits to having placed it to divert suspicion, as he did with the ten dollar bill planted on Frank Richards, and Frank is finally cleared.

The final story in the series is entitled "Frank Richards' Choice".

The story opens with a sound familiar with Frank Richards:-

"Franky!"

Click, click!

"Franky, you jay!"

Bob Lawless bawled up the stairs at the Lawless ranch; but only the click of the typewriters answered him.

Frank Richards was busy.

The schoolboy author had turned out early that morning. He had 'copy' to produce for Mr. Isaacs, the proprietor of the *Thompson Press*; and he was putting in a couple of hours before school.

"Franky!" yelled Bob, "Time for school, you ass!"

Click, click!

Bob Lawless came tramping up the stairs, and he put a wrathful and indignant face into the doorway. Frank Richards did not even look round. When the tide of inspiration was flowing, the schoolboy author was blind and deaf to all other considerations.

Click, click, click, click! The typewriter was again going strong.

"You precious ass!" said Bob Lawless. "We'll start, anyhow, and you can come on after us. You'll have to ride hard."

Click, click!

Bob Lawless tramped down the stairs again. Frank Richards forgot his existence the next moment, as his nimble fingers clicked away on the keys of the typewriter.

Bob rides off to school accompanied by Lord St. Austells, who is Vere Beauclerc's uncle, and who is staying as a guest at the Lawless ranch.

"Frank is beginning literary work early!" he remarked.

"I believe he began to scribble before he could walk," said Bob, laughing. "He does a story every week for the local paper – old Isaacs, you know. They pay him ten dollars for it."

"I've seen some of his productions" said Lord St. Austells. "Very remarkable in one so youthful! It is rather a pity that a lad so gifted should pass his life in these remote backwoods."

They ride on and meet Beauclerc on the way. Bob Lawless and Beauclerc ride on to the school and Lord St. Austells turns round to ride back to the ranch, but on the way back he is attacked and kidnapped by two ruffians from Thompson who intend to hold him to ransom for 500 dollars. He is pulled from the saddle by a lariat and his horse gallops off back towards the ranch. Meanwhile Frank Richards has finished his story, realises it is very late, and gallops off towards school. On the way he meets Lord St. Austells' horse and realises that something is wrong. He follows the tracks and finds Lord St. Austells roped to a tree stump, guarded by one of the thugs. The other has gone to town to send ransom note to the ranch. Frank Richards creeps up on the thug and knocks him unconscious with a heavy stone and rescues Lord St. Austells, who then returns to the

ranch and alerts a posse to capture the thugs. Frank Richards rides off to school and arrives just in time for dinner, but when he explains what has happened his lateness is excused.

Bob tells him that Lord St. Austells has been speaking to Mr. Lawless about him, and that he believes he wants to take Frank back to England and pay for his education. Frank is startled by this news and is very thoughtful on the way home.

He dismissed the matter from his mind at last. He met Lord St. Austells at the early supper at the ranch-house. His lordship was extremely genial to the schoolboy author, and asked him a good many questions concerning his contributions to the *Thompson Press*. After supper his lordship lighted his cigar and strolled out into the porch, open to a soft summer breeze from the prairies. Out on the plains, the soft, sweet moonlight of British Columbia lay like a silver sea. Lord St. Austells beckoned to Frank, who joined him in the porch. Frank's heart beat fast, for he realised now that Bob Lawless' surmise was correct, and he wondered what his answer would be to his lordship; for even yet he could not decide whether he would say yes or no.

Lord St. Austells was silent for a few minutes, smoking his cigar and looking out into the soft moonlight. He turned at last to Frank Richards abruptly.

"I owe you a great deal, Richards," he said.

"Nothing at all, sir," answered Frank.

His lordship smiled.

"Twice you have saved me, each time from death, in all probability," he said. "I cannot forget that. I want to do something, if I can, Richards, to make the account equal."

Frank was silent.

"I have been thinking a good deal about you," went on his lordship, after a pause, "and I am going to make a suggestion. Would you like to return to England with me?"

It was out now.

"I understand that your father had some financial difficulties, and that is why you were sent to your uncle in Canada?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your father is in India now?"

"Yes."

"It must have been a disappointment to him when you had to be taken away from your old school?"

"I think it was, sir," said Frank. "But I have written to him often to tell him that I am very happy here."

"This is a great country," said his lordship. "Your relatives here seem to be kindness itself. I have a very great admiration for Mr. Lawless – a splendid type of man. But in this country, Richards, you have not, of course, the chances you would have at home!"

"I – I suppose not."

"I have spoken to your uncle," continued Lord St. Austells. He is willing that you should decide this matter for yourself, subject to your father's approval when he is communicated with. I should be very glad to take you into my charge. You would return to your old school in England, and go on to the University at the proper time, and all charges would be defrayed by me. I should treat you just as if you were a son of my own; and you need have no scruple about accepting what I can offer, Richards. I should be acting in your father's place in his absence."

"I thank you from my very heart, sir!" said Frank, in a faltering voice. The kindness of the earl's tone moved him deeply. "I should not hesitate for a moment to accept; but—"

"I hope you will accept," said his lordship gravely. "You have shown a literary ability, Frank, that is very remarkable in one so young. This gift would have free play in the older country; you will never have such opportunities here as you might have in England. You realise that?"

"I suppose it is so, sir", said Frank.

"You have gifts and abilities, and there is no reason why you should not take a distinguished place in the world," said Lord St. Austells. "I shall be pleased and happy to make it possible. I hope you will accept, Richards."

Frank was silent.

"Well, Frank?" said his lordship at last, with a faint smile.

Frank started a little.

"I – I –"

"Speak freely, my boy, said Lord St. Austells kindly. "I am anxious for you to accept my offer. I want to take you with me to England, and see you rise to your proper place in the world. But I shall not be offended if you refuse."

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart, sir!" said Frank, in a low voice. "I shall always be grateful for your kindness; but –"

"But –" smiled his lordship.

"I – I'd rather not leave my chums, sir, and – and my home here," said Frank. "And, although I know I could accept your kindness, I – I – I think that I ought rather –"

"I think I understand," said Lord St. Austells. "You would rather fight your own way through the world than be beholden to anyone."

Frank coloured.

"Not exactly that, sir," he said. "I would gladly be beholden to you, if there was need. But I belong to Cedar Creek, and I will stick to Cedar Creek. Some day I shall return to England – some day, I hope, I shall be earning my bread with my pen. But until then –"

"It will not be easy," said Lord St. Austells. "You would start under better auspices, Frank, if you accepted my offer."

"I know it, sir. But difficulties were only made to be overcome, weren't they?" said Frank with a smile.

Lord St. Austells laughed.

"Well, I am disappointed, but perhaps you are right, Frank", he said. "Anyhow, we shall part good friends; and in the future – when it comes – Frank Richards, the celebrated author, will always be a welcome guest at St. Austells' House."

Thus Frank Richards remains in Canada and the way is left open for a resumption of series, although this never materialised, and we are left to assume that Frank Richards returned to England in his own good time, but certainly, Frank Richards, the celebrated author, is always a welcome guest with us.

HARRY BLOWERS REMEMBERS

(Harry is a long-standing member of the Northern Old Boys' Book Club. He has recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday)

My introduction into the literary world was my mother reading to me Cousin Tom's Corner in *People's Friend*. Our local post office was at one end of a draper's shop and they had a little table with penny children's books on it, my mother bought one when she went in and read it to me at home. At Christmas time there was none of the outrageous

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AN AMUSING INCIDENT
FROM THE STORY
**"WILLIAM AND THE
UNFAIR SEX"**

demand of children today via TV, our Christmas present was an orange, an apple, a few sweets, possibly a small game and a book. My book was called *Our Darlings*.

I started school in 1915 and after a spell in the baby's class playing with cowrie shells and clay I started my education properly. By the time I moved into what we called the big

school, I could read and write. My mother had started me with periodicals by buying me the comic *Funny Wonder*. I soon dropped *Our Darlings* for more advanced annuals through the comic type like *Sunbeam* and *Tiger Tim's* and eventually *Adventureland*. I started to read storypapers like *Adventure*, *Wizard*, *Rover*, etc. New papers were published by Thomsons, a man usually outside our school giving pamphlets advertising them, *Vanguard*, *Hotspur*, etc. I enjoyed reading Invisible Dick, Morgyn the Mighty, Iron Bill and many others.

I stayed sometimes at my Aunts. She took the *Happy Mag* and that was my introduction to Richmal Crompton's William stories. My cousin, older than me, took the weekly *Popular*. Of course I read it and was hooked on the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver, so I was still reading the school stories when I started work at 14 years old. In my late teens I joined the Cyclist-touring Club so I was reading cycling literature and books on places to visit.

I would be in my mid-twenties, walking on Hunslet Road in my lunch break, and in the corner of a sweet shop window I saw two copies of *Schoolboy's Own Library* half price. I bought them, read them and realised how something in my life had been missing and started to purchase *Magnet* and *Gem* and *S.O.L.* and to look for back numbers. A shop on Westgate had thousands of copies of all papers at half price, second hand. Unfortunately a massive fire burnt out the whole area. At this time I had become an avid reader of any thing I could get hold of. I used to go to Miles second-hand bookshop regularly. I remember picking up there five early *Holiday Annuals* at a shilling each.

Later on I was walking up Barinhall Street in Leeds; the only shop in that street was Beans booksellers and there, in the centre of the windows, was the likeness to a *Magnet* cover and to my surprise it said *The Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co in Egypt* but the price was too high for me then. I went home but I was so anxious for it I decided to buy it. I asked the shop owner if there were going to be anymore of these reprints to let me know – he never did, but later in C.D. it explained about Howard Baker's project. I still take C.D. and re-read my collection of Howard Baker and others of a similar type. John Wernham's reprints are very good, so I've plenty of reading to last me still my hundredth birthday.

WANTED: C.D. monthlies. Will pay 25 to 50p. C.D. Annuals £3 to £5. Modern Boy Annuals, books about the radio, radio comedy, radio personalities, radio and TV fun. PAUL GALVIN, 2 The Lindales, Pogmoor, Barnsley, S. Yorks. (01226) 295613.

WANTED: *The Schoolgirls' Own* weekly, from first issue, 1921.
SYLVIA REED, 8 Goline Court, Hillman 6168, Western Australia.
Email: diamond2@inet.net.au

Tributes to DARRELL SWIFT



The above photograph is one of the last ever taken of Darrell. He is second from the left, and others in the picture are Marie and Bob Whiter, with whom he had been staying in California until the day before he died, and Matthew Borrow. Matthew, from Potters Bar, is the son of Bob's nephew, Malcolm Borrow, who kindly supplied this photograph.

From BOB WHITER (California):

He gave Marie and me a fond hug, thanked us most profusely for putting him up – and he was off – catching his plane from Los Angeles to fly on to New York and Allentown where he intended to spend a further week with friends, before returning to the U.K. and Leeds. It was not to be! It was with a most profound shock and combined disbelief and sadness that we heard the tragic news the following morning – that our very dear friend Darrell Swift didn't survive a massive coronary at Kennedy Air Port.

Darrell had broken his journey as he had done on several previous occasions to pass a few enjoyable days with us. In this instance his visit coincided with a sojourn of my nephew Malcolm, Valerie, his wife and Mathew their son. Everybody got along famously with each other.

Darrell was such a charming chap, he made friends easily with everyone. The amazing thing was that Darrell had never read the companion papers in their heyday and it wasn't until the Bunter Books and the Howard Baker reprints that he really got hooked. But when holding a conversation with him you got the impression he'd read the stories all his life! I shall always treasure the memories of discussing them with him. I am sure all his many chums will feel as Marie and I do – we have lost not only a friend but a staunch supporter of the hobby. His fine work with the Leeds club and as Treasurer for the Friars club alone will, I am sure, long be remembered. Yorkshire may well be proud of her lovable and loyal son.

Did I hear the shades of Johnny Bull and Jack Blake murmur "here! here!?"

Goodbye Darrell old chap – I'm sure the flags of the Hamilton Schools will be flying at half-mast.

From ANTHONY and EILEEN BUCKERIDGE (Lewes, Sussex):

We have known Darrell for a number of years and it was a great shock to us to hear on Friday - 2nd August - that he had died so unexpectedly. Our first contact with Darrell was when he approached Anthony to become the Vice- president of the Northern Branch of the Old Boys' Book Club. Since then, we have been constantly in communication with him in connection with activities of this Club.

Darrell became the driving force in establishing an annual *get together* of Jennings fans and it was entirely due to his sympathetic understanding of the difficulties for Anthony of travelling that he instigated annual meetings in Lewes - a mere four miles from our home. These meetings have been very successful and he closed this year's meeting enthusiastically looking forward to their continuance.

Not only have we valued his friendship and admired his considerable organisational skills, energy and ability but we have become impressed with his infectious camaraderie which has made him many new friends over the years both at home and overseas. He will be greatly missed.

Upon reflection, we realise that Darrell loved making the best of every aspect of his life whether travelling, visiting friends or using his tremendous energy in organising groups for the exchange of views about writers that they admired. Also, of course, he had a truly Dickensian relish for the sort of entertainment enjoyed round a table with friends while enjoying good food.

There is no doubt as Mary Cadogan has suggested that the continuance of his work would be his most fitting memorial.

From BILL BRADFORD (Ealing, Middlesex):

I learnt of Darrell's death relatively soon after it happened and could hardly credit it. Only the previous day I had planned to write him and ask when it would be convenient to visit him and attend a Northern Club Meeting, which he had suggested when we met at Maidstone in April.

I knew Darrell for some 20 years. We only met when he came to a London event and stayed with me. We mainly chatted on the phone, especially after the arrival of his catalogue.

A worthy product of Yorkshire, forthright and full of humour, the title of his business 'Happy Hours' is a true reflection of time spent with him. A pillar of the Northern Club, he will be sadly missed by friends there, and worldwide.

From RON GILLAT (New Zealand):

All Darrell's many friends here in Christchurch, New Zealand, were deeply saddened to learn of Darrell's passing in New York towards the end of the tour that so recently brought him into our midst for what was, then, a very happy occasion.

Darrell and I first crossed paths when I responded to one of his Happy Hours Unlimited advertisements in "Collectors' Digest" during the 1980's. And what happy hours Darrell's personality, and his wares, brought to us all in Christchurch.

Darrell responded to my inquiry with his always good value supplies and his usual chatty letter in which he mentioned that he had only recently visited Christchurch, New Zealand, where he had stayed at the United Services Hotel. That establishment, which has since given way to a new commercial building, was located right in the centre of Christchurch and just across the street from the building in which I was working at the time. So although Darrell and I lived on opposite sides of the world, had never met, and had been brought to correspond through the "Collectors' Digest" introduction, we had been within 20 yards of each other earlier that year-what a small world we live in!

Darrell visited Christchurch five times over subsequent years and subsequently always stayed at the home of Don and Hazel Reed, longstanding stalwarts of the hobby in Christchurch. During each visit Don and Hazel always invited the local hobbyists for an evening at their home where we discussed all the many facets of our collections with Darrell as guest of honour. It was thus through Darrell's good offices that we came to regard ourselves as the Northern Old Boys Book Club - Southern Hemisphere Division. Such was the influence of Darrell that he encouraged the formation of a Club 12,000 miles from his home. We doubt any man can have a greater tribute to the wide spread of his influence and character.

Darrell was always the epitome of patience as he answered all our questions - questions that would probably have been trivial to him, though he would never have treated them as such, but questions that we loved having someone so close to the heart of the hobby to answer.

During his last visit Darrell was able to up-date us with his visits to other hobbyists whom he had visited in Thailand, and Australia and would be visiting in Auckland, New Zealand, and the USA on his way home. But we always felt that he regarded Christchurch with great affection.

This city, the most English city in New Zealand, always seemed [to us anyway] to have more hobbyists per capita than any other city that he visited.

To all Darrell's relatives, friends, and fellow-hobbyists we extend our sympathy and I know that the gaps his passing has caused throughout the whole world will be just as great elsewhere as the enormous gap he leaves here.

Darrell - supplier, authority, friend, diplomat, ambassador - farewell from all your New Zealand friends - we will always miss you.

From NAVEED HAQUE (Canada):

I was absolutely devastated to hear of Darrell Swift's passing. It was so unexpected - as far as I was aware he had no serious health problems.

My last letter received from him was this May, and he was full of his upcoming 'world trip' to Australia and New Zealand, asking me to meet up with him in California. I have a happy memory of meeting Darrell in 1998 on a visit to Bob Whiter's home in L.A. It was the first time Darrell was meeting us in person. We revelled in hobby discussions, and visited local areas of interest - Disneyland, Universal studios, MGM, passing by the Hollywood homes of former 'stars' of the screen. While on this trip I recall doing my 'gangster imitation', and jokingly Darrell sometimes referred to me in subsequent letters as 'Luigi' (of the Al Capone gang).

I note that we had corresponded since 1990, and as I write this I am browsing over his letters to me (which have been photocopied and bound in his honour).

I shall miss a good friend and a prominent hobby personality. He was so proud of having spent a night in Frank Richard's study at Rose Lawn during Edith Hood's residency. As he put it, perhaps he was the only hobby fan who had done so!

Now he is with Frank Richards in that special place reserved for kindly people.

From ANDREW MILES (Australia):

I have today learned from a couple of people the sad tidings of Darrell Swift's death. I had originally come to know him through the purchase of Hamiltonia. A few years ago we met while he was visiting Sydney and we became friends. Over the years we exchanged many emails. We met up in Sydney a few times and it was I who persuaded him to take his celebrated walking tour over the arch of the Sydney Harbor Bridge.

In March this year I stayed with Darrell in Leeds for a few days and he was a most convivial and generous host. He also arranged for me to attend and to speak at a meeting of the Northern Old Boys Book Club. It was a most enjoyable evening. While we were visiting Scarborough Castle Darrell bought a replica medieval broad sword to hang on his dining room wall. He persistently blamed me for this act of extravagance! One evening I was delighted to attend one of his candle- light suppers, a memorable experience!

Darrell and I met up again just a couple of weeks ago on the 18th of July. He had a few hours in Sydney while en route to New Zealand and we had a delicious meal of fish and chips at a famous restaurant in Bondi. It was a beautiful day and we were able to sit outside and look out over the beach and the sea. It is sad to think that this would be the last time we would meet, but it is a happy final memory.

Darrell was an easy-going, cheerful and unfailingly generous man whom I am proud to have known and whom I will always remember with a smile. His effervescent sense of humor was infectious and we shared many a good joke. His enthusiasm for the collection of old boys' books and for the associated dubs and activities endeared him to many people.

Ave atque vale.

From DEREK MARSDEN (Liverpool):

The shock news of Darrell's sudden death while on holiday in America came out of the blue. Unlike many others, I knew Darrell as an acquaintance rather than a friend, but it never felt like that. I have been used to his cheerful, enthusiastic and ever-friendly approach to life and people for close on twenty years now and at no point during this time have I even given a thought to the possibility that things might change. He was just so alive, so bubbly. We first met at the Piccadilly Plaza in Manchester when, trading as 'Happy Hours Unlimited' with Keith Smith, he was selling the very DC Thomson papers that I was so eager to buy. Our mutual interest in juvenile publications frequently led me to stay chatting much longer at his stand than at most, especially at the bi-monthly bookfairs in Pudsey where he seemed more at home. At his suggestion I made a few visits to the Old Boys' Book Club in Leeds where he always made me feel extremely welcome, and in recent years, again at his invitation, I have given some talks there. I cannot believe that I won't see him again. Like his family and friends I will miss him enormously but I also know that the Club members will now be acutely aware of their own grievous loss, and my sympathy goes out to them too.

GEMS OF HAMILTONIA from Pete Hanger

Tubby's eye – he had a special eye for cake – had noticed that it was a very large cake, and he considered it extremely probable that a good portion of it was left over from tea. It was very likely that the chums of the Fourth intended the remainder for supper. That intention was to be carried out now, only the cake was to form Tubby's supper. SOL 389 : BF 1274

... Tea at Cliff House was an attractive function. It was fairly certain that there would be a cake. Marjorie and her friends were attractive too, though not, of course, so attractive as the cake! MAGNET 1275

... "Fancy being gated on a half holiday for nothing!" (said Tommy Dodd)

"For nothing?" asked Newcombe.

"Practically nothing."

"Oh!" said Jimmy Silver. "Only practically?"

The Fistical Four smiled. Mr. Roger Manders, the senior Modern master, was a severe gentleman – very severe. But even Roger Manders was not likely to "gate" a fellow for nothing at all. "Practically" nothing was quite another matter. SOL 389 : BF 1235

How Coker's position in the school was different from that of any other fellow in the Fifth was a secret known only to Coker. Who were the fellows who looked up to him was another mystery. But Potter and Greene did not argue. Argument only added to the length of Coker's conversation. MAGNET 1311

Billy Bunter waited and listened anxiously till he heard the door of the den close. Then he opened the communicating door and blinked in. An ample – not to say gargantuan – tea was laid and Wells and Thomas were gone. Bunter cut across to the door by which they had left, and turned the key in the lock. He whipped across to the French windows, locked them, and drew the curtains across to guard against the bare possibility of somebody coming up the steps to the balcony. He was safe on all sides now.

For one ecstatic moment he gazed at it, at the magnificent supply of good things that he owed to his weird gift of ventriloquism.

Then he sat down and started.

His fat face beamed, as his active jaws worked. This was happiness! This was life! This was something like! Glad now was the Owl of the Remove, from the bottom of his fat heart, that he had not shaken the dust of Wharton Lodge from his feet, as he had thought of doing. Wharton Lodge was all right. It was as right as rain"

Gobble, gobble, gobble!

Billy Bunter's face grew red and shiny. His breath came short and spasmodic. But he kept on manfully.

Gobble, gobble, gobble!

Harry Wharton & Co. were enjoying their afternoon. But Billy Bunter was more than enjoying his. Billy Bunter was in seventh heaven. MAGNET 1351

... "The same lot, of course. I'm going to spot them. The Head can do nothing: Prout can do nothing: Quelch can't or won't do anything; and now they'll find that they're up against me. And if I don't spot them you can use my head for a football!"

With that Coker left his friends and marched across to the Famous Five of the Remove under the elms.

"Fancy using Coker's head for a football!" murmured Potter.

"Nothing in it to damage!" remarked Greene. MAGNET 1225



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HORACE DILLEY WRITES:

Born and bred in the Country, smells have always had a fascination for me. The new mown hay, the tar put on farm buildings and yes! even the smell from the trucks of manure that used to arrive from London in my youth to spread on the agricultural land.

Another type of smell has also had its place as far as I am concerned and that is the smell of newsprint in the Newsagent's shop. I recall when I was about 10 years of age going along to the little Newsagent's shop in Langford, the parish where I was brought up, with my two pence or four pence to buy a periodical. In actual fact the shop was the "front room" of the Agent's dwelling house. There laid out on a wide counter was a superb collection of magazines with just the top showing of each to denote which magazine it was. Invariably my money would be spent on *The Magnet*, sometimes *The Gem* and, on odd occasions, the *Nelson Lee*. As a very special treat the *Schoolboys Own Library* was



Taken from the sketch book of the "Holiday Annual" artist, here are some of the outstanding incidents in the match between those old rivals of the cricket field—Greyfriars and St. Jim's. The excellent quality of the cricket was only equalled by the keen sporting spirit with which it was played out—Greyfriars winning a memorable match by two wickets!

purchased. Soon afterwards I had all three of the weekly books delivered. Turn on the clock, and at the age of 14, my first job on leaving school was to work for a Newsagent in the neighbouring town of Biggleswade some three miles away.

I had to meet the 6.25 "paper train" six days a week with a sack barrow, take all the bundles back to the shop, where the rounds were sorted, and off I went to deliver in my particular area. After a short break, the rest of my day was taken up in delivering periodicals all round the town. This job lasted about two years.

Time still marched on. I had completed by 5½ years in the forces and, about 1950, one day I was in the corner shop of a local Newsagent on the Town Market Square. I was the Secretary of the Biggleswade Chamber of Trade and I had gone along to collect the shopkeeper's annual subscription. He was busy at the time so I browsed around for a while. And then... and then... out of the blue I spotted a St. Jim's book featuring Tom Merry and his pals. I picked it up and a host of memories came flooding back. Of course, I bought the book.

At the outbreak of war I had bundled up all my books in a tea chest to help the war effort. Do you recall those tea chests with the almost lethal strips of metal edging?

The smell of the newspaper shop... the St. Jim's book... I started my collection all over again. I acquired a lot of the originals, the Howard Baker volumes, the Cassell's collection and many many more.

The corner Newsagent shop... it is still there, and still in the same trade. The shopkeeper of my earlier days has long since passed on. The layout has altered considerably. But I can almost pick out the spot where that St. Jim's book was. Happy days.

Thank you so much for the *Collector's Digest*. I look forward to it just as much as I did to those delivery days when the *Magnet*, *Gem* and *Nelson Lee* were pushed through the door.

A FAVOURITE CHARACTER by Bob Whiter

Part Two

Mauly's truly noble nature is well displayed in the second Xmas adventure at Mauleverer Towers.

Bunter has bilked the taxi driver to the extent of getting him to drive the fat junior from Wharton Lodge to Mauly's home; stopping twice on route for snacks (which the driver had paid for). The poor man has searched high and low for his fat passenger; Bunter had jumped from the taxi whilst still on the driveway leading to the Towers and vanished. Finally in desperation the irate taxi-man seeks information from Mauly. When told that Mauly hasn't seen and doesn't want to see Bunter, the driver gets a little excited! (quote from story).

"I ain't losing twelve pounds!" said the taxi man, showing signs of excitement.

"Certainly not!" agreed Lord Mauleverer soothingly. "That would be rather hard cheese, by jove! But you're really not likely to get it out of Bunter, so perhaps you would not object to my paying it?"

Lord Mauleverer looked inquiringly at the taxi man. The taxi man looked at Lord Mauleverer. Really, there was no doubt on the subject, and the enquiry was superfluous.

"You're a gentleman, sir!" said the taxi man.

"Thank you very much!" said Lord Mauleverer urbanely. "I believe I've got a wallet somewhere. Yaas here it is. Let me see. Two fivers and two pound notes – I mean three. That's right – what? Porson!"

"Yes, my Lord?"

"This gentleman has driven from Surrey today. A very long and cold drive in this weather, Porson. You will see that he has refreshment before he drives home, Porson." (From *Magnet* 1244, December 19th 1931 "The Ghost of Mauleverer Towers!")

When Billy Bunter is unjustly expelled and the Remove revolt in protest – it is Mauly who suggests that they bar out on the island on the River Sark (unlawfully claimed by Sir Hilton Popper). And although some of the juniors put up cash for supplies, it is Mauly who takes the lion's share in buying not only food, but all sorts of camping gear necessary for a prolonged stay on the island. *Magnet* series No. 1374-1382 (1934).

When food supplies run out on the island, Fisher T. Fish manages to get a consignment of food delivered by barge. But it is one of his money-making schemes. He asks double prices for every article of food. Mauly steps in and on learning Fishy paid ten pounds (£10) for the packing-case full of food gives the get rich quick junior twenty pounds (£20) for it and invites the juniors to be his guests – with the exception of Fishy! This is the biter bit indeed! For any part of the food, ie, Fishy wants a ham – it's £20! Fishy decides to take a cake – it's £20! Fishy remembers that there are a few of the rations left, but even that last resource is denied him! It's still £20 a shot!

Likewise, when due to Dr. Looke's illness and absence, Mr. Hacker is made headmaster pro tem. His appointment of Carne as his head prefect is a disaster and coupled with his own interfering and harsh manner, causes the Remove to go on strike. Again it is our old friend Mauleverer who suggests not only barring out in the tuck shop, but sends Mr. and Mrs. Mible and their son away on vacation with a fat cheque for their trouble. His leadership is portrayed splendidly. When Hacker gets P.C. Tozer to try and effect an entry into the juniors' stronghold – nobody wants to lay a hand on a police officer! Mauly solves the problem by holding a red-hot poker in the P.C.s way!

Then Mr. Hacker desperate to use any means of subduing the juniors hires a gang of roughs to force their way through the door. Mauly calmly takes a squirt, fills it with water, just hot enough to sting, and sprays the axe and crowbar wielding toughs through one of the apertures in the door. Needless to say it does the trick. See *Magnet* series Nos. 1510-1515 (1937).

Mention has been made of the second South Seas series in 1938, when Mauly, Bunter and the famous five journey there in search of Brian Mauleverer. It is during their hunt for Mauly's cousin, that they are ship-wrecked and on a raft bereft of provisions following a storm.

One remaining can of corned beef is carefully doled out, a small portion to each of the seven juniors. Showing great humanity Mauly doesn't eat his, but carefully wraps it in a handkerchief before stowing it away in his pocket. Twenty-four hours passes and Billy Bunter starts wandering in his mind, imagining that its teatime and he's back at Greyfriars. While the other juniors gaze at him in horror Mauly crawls over to him and taking the chunk of beef from his pocket pops it into Bunter's mouth. From the story:- 'The Famous

Five watched him in silence. It was twenty-four hours since a fragment of food had passed their lips. They knew now that it was forty-eight hours since a fragment had passed Mauly's.

Bunter gobbled.

"Oh Mauly, old man!" murmured Bob. "Mauly, you old ass!"

Mauleverer grinned faintly.

"I can stand it better than Bunter!" he said.' Perhaps not as good as the previous South Seas series, when the juniors accompany Vernon Smith and his father, the latter set of stories has its moments, as I think you'll agree from the brief extract previously quoted.

In the second Harry Wharton's downfall series (*Magnets* 1285-1296 (1932)), it is Mauleverer, not Nugent, Wharton's own special chum that phones Colonel Wharton to come to the school and intercede on Harry's behalf, when the Captain is under sentence of expulsion for punching Loder. Even in the face of overwhelming evidence he has proved to be a first rate friend. There have been occasions when Harry Wharton's friends have been doubtful – but not Mauly.

"And why do you believe in Wharton's innocence?" asks Mr. Quelch.

"Because he has told me he is innocent" answers Mauly.

"You know Wharton is a person to be trusted sir, otherwise you'd never have made him your head boy."

In times of trouble such as when Wharton has had difficulty in making up the junior eleven, Mauly, the lazy slacker as most people view him, has stepped into the breach and played a jolly good game; giving full support to his skipper!

Who was it who, it is said, treated a charlady in the same manner as a duchess? Lord Mauleverer.

I have always loved it when he has a prominent part in the stories – Greyfriars for me wouldn't be Greyfriars without him.

Is it beyond the bounds of imagination to imagine dear old Mauly after leaving Greyfriars and the 'Varsity' becoming either leader of the House of Lords or Prime Minister of the U.K.? I'm sure he would have made a first class job if it!

The lists of characters which graced some of the *Holiday Annuals* are I'm afraid not always completely accurate, and one wonders if Frank Richards gave them his complete blessing. In view of this I wonder if Mauly's middle name was really Plantagenant.

WANTED: "You're a Brick, Angela". And "Women and Children First" by Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig. JOHN BRIDGWATER, 5A, Saulfland Place, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 4QP.

WANTED: Post-war Annuals – *Tom Merry's Own* No. 3 and any after No. 5. *Billy Bunter's Own* No. 4 – Front: Bunter at cooking stove. If any reader has any for disposal please notify total cost to ERNEST HOLMAN, 10 Glenbervie Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3JU.

BILL BRADFORD

(Editor's Note: I think C.D. readers would like to know more about some of our regular contributors and luminaries of our hobby, and to start this series I have put several questions about himself to Bill Bradford. His answers are printed below. Bill and Thelma, his late wife, were popular hosts of London Club meetings at their home for several years. Thelma, who died fifteen years ago, was a lovely lady whose charm and kindness will never be forgotten by many of us. Bill has continued to host club meetings at his home, and he is a stalwart supporter of many aspects of the hobby. M.C.)



Thelma and Bill

BILL writes:

Thelma and I joined the London O.B.B.C. in March 1976, on the recommendation of Sarah Badiel, and were made so welcome that we became regular attendants at meetings, hosting quite a few at our home. One of the last things Thelma said before she died was not to give up the Club or my hobby. How right she was. I could have never survived the last 15 years without the support of dear friends in the Club.

As a boy I was an avid reader of almost everything. Fortunately I received excellent pocket money, all of which found its way to my newsagent. My first purchases, about 1930, were *Chums* and *Boys Own Paper* but by 1939 I had sampled most publications. What a decade the 1930s was for juvenile publications! I never parted with anything but, alas, my stepmother cleared much out for salvage during the War.

After 'demob' I eventually purchased the Goldhawk Books and copies of the *Sexton Blake Library*. Norman Shaw was my downfall, and I think he took the description of Aladdin's Cave from me! I think it was he who put me in touch with Roger Jenkins and the Hamilton Library. Still collecting, I have a fairly large collection of weekly issues, sundry libraries and free gifts. Apart from the annuals that you might expect, I have a lot

of hardback fiction, authors of pre-war juveniles, plus adult crime fiction, mainly from the same period although I have a taste for more modern works, such as Gunn/Gray, Dexter, Creasey (as Marric) and Burley. I also enjoy historical fiction, namely Bernard Cornwell, Alexander Kent/Douglas Reeman and Winston Graham.

It is very hard to state actual preferences. Nostalgia and real judgement are difficult to divide. However, I think I can honestly say that my favourite papers were *Chums*, *Modern Boy* and *Detective Weekly*. My choice of books (very hard) would be *Ross Poldark* by Winston Graham, *Yo Ho for the Spanish Main* by S. Walkey and a tie for 3rd place between *The Prince of Paradose* by Francis Gerard and *The Huntsman* by Gerald Verner...

My only other hobby, if you can call it such, is TV – it used to be the cinema! Now for some biographical details: I was born at St. Mary's Road, Ealing on 31st May 1923. My father was a commercial traveller, my mother a professional pianist and operatic singer. Four years later we moved to the Northfields area, about a mile away.

I was educated at Gunnersbury Grammar, a Roman Catholic school, although we were C.of E. My parents separated when I was 12, my mother developing cancer and dying four years later. I left school prior to final exams in order to nurse her. Father returned home a week before she died. I started work ten days later, with the Middlesex County Council (Education – Finance).

During the war, father and I joined the L.D.V. (Home Guard) on its formation in May 1940. Entering the R.A.F. in early 1942, after training at Cranwell (Radio Telephony and Direction Finding), I served on many units in the U.K. mainly in Scotland. I spent the last 2 years in South East Asia, including 15 months on the Cocos (Keeling) Isles, half way between Ceylon and Australia and some 450 miles from Java/Sumatra. This is where the German raider Emden was sunk in 1914 by HMS Sydney, on which a distant cousin was serving. I was not demobbed until 1946. The M.C.C. did offer me my old job, but at less pay than I had been receiving, so I took a position as a traveller, covering most towns within 50 miles of London. I met my future wife, Thelma when she was 17 and we married 3 years later, in 1952, moving the following year to my present home where my son and daughter, now aged 49 and 47 were born. The latter has a daughter of 19 and son of 17.

Thelma and I joined the Liberal Party in 1958, where I held several posts and contested several local elections – unsuccessfully!!

My company was taken over in 1963 but an old supplier offered me a position as senior executive, responsible for S.E. England, East Anglia and the South West, motoring about 1000 miles weekly.

In 1978 I developed Angina and resigned on medical grounds. Later I got a job only 5 minutes walk from home. Following a stroke, my father-in-law came to live with us, so I retired at 60 to help out at home. He died a year later and my wife 2 years after that, with identical cancer to that of my mother. Twice is too much!!

I have not been abroad for several decades. In my declining years, I only go where the car will take me, plus I can never get tired of Scotland, Wales, the South West and the Lakes. Unfortunately, the sands of time are running out.

From ARTHUR F.G. EDWARDS

I have more than once put my (very adverse) opinion of Bunter on record. It follows that although I bought most, possibly all, the Bunter Books, they were for my daughter. I never read even the odd page of one. I believe she still has them.

Even before Howard Baker started to publish facsimiles, I sought to keep my interest in the *Magnet* and *Gem* alive. Thus when I learned that Fleetway had produced a souvenir edition of the first *Magnet*, I rushed to buy it. Soon after I bought J.S. Butcher's *Greyfriars School, a Prospectus*. Although I refer to the latter from time to time it is only to remind myself how much out of balance the forms at Greyfriars were. After reading *Magnet No.1* in 1965, I filed it for safekeeping. For some inexplicable reason, I have just re-read it and was amazed how certain characters changed over the years.

As No.1 was headed the MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON, it was obvious that his character would change, for the better, and fairly soon, if the magazine was to have a protracted life. My Father had told me of Bulstrode, (he read the *Magnet* before WWI), so although in the *Magnets* I read he was largely a nonentity, just mentioned occasionally, I was not surprised to find him shown as a bully. I was surprised to find Russell in a key role. Butcher says he was 'A good steady type' and I would not quarrel with that, even though I seem to remember that he was generally just one of the crowd.

My real surprise was the then character of Frank Nugent. He claimed, apparently with some justification to be the best boxer/fighter in the Remove, and seemed to have a strong will. Although he became Wharton's closest friend, to me he seemed to be the least impressive of the Famous Five. I did not like him, if only because of the way he allowed Dicky to walk all over him. That brings me to, my *Bête Noire*, Bunter. If he had remained just the stupid, not too greedy and clumsy due to being short-sighted, character that he appeared to be in the first issue, and not the despicable one Hamilton turned him into, I would have at least tolerated him, may even have been amused by him, from time to time.

A word about Quelch, or his use of one word - 'sir'. He uses it as a suffix to an order, not as a recognition of status, where later he came to say 'boy'. Was that use the norm in 1908?

Although I read every *Gem* and *Magnet* from 1928, until in turn, they ceased to be published, they did not provide me with enough reading material to satisfy my needs. I filled the gap in a number of ways, one of which was to obtain copies of other 2d magazines either by 'swopping' or purchase second-hand. Other than the *Skipper*, which I could not tolerate, all were grist to the mill, but I seem to remember the *Wizard* and *Champion* as the most favoured. I hope among you readers there is one who can confirm, amplify or correct one particular memory.

At the time of writing the disposal of discarded tyres is identified as an environmental hazard. In the *Wizard* (but it may have been the *Champion*), there ran a series covering the adventures of three boys, Tufty Gale, Blinker Bing and Chick O'Neil, known as the Stormy Orphans. Their adventures were centred on a crank headmaster who imposed a vegetarian diet on his boys, and the ways they sought to find ways of eating meat. However, his odd behaviour was not confined to the diet. In one episode he acquired a load of old tyres and, as a punishment, made boys saw them up into convenient lengths to fuel the school boiler.

I am not suggesting this as a solution to the disposal of tyres problem, but wish to check how accurate my memory is. In particular:

1. Were Gale, Bing and O'Neil the Stormy Orphans?
2. Did their adventures appear in the *Wizard*?
3. In what year(s)?
4. Have I remembered the character of the headmaster and the tyres incident correctly? Can any octogenarian or collector of Wizards help me?

MORE BOOK REVIEWS

***The Lights on at Signpost* - George MacDonald Fraser (Harper Collins, 2002). (Reviewed by Mark Taha).**

My favourite author writes again - the only reason I don't call him the greatest living Englishman is that he regards himself as a Scot. His "book record" - wrote twenty-two, I've read twenty-one, really enjoyed twenty-including this one.

It's a mixture-half of it consists of the reactionary rantings of an angry old man (he said it!). He's Politically Incorrect enough to blow a large number of gaskets and I expect most CD readers agree with him even more than I do. I also expect that the other half will be of more interest-his reminiscences of the film world. He's written screenplays-especially swashbucklers "The Three Musketeers" and its sequels, "The Prince and the Pauper" (I agree-Mark Lester was miscast) and his own "Royal Flash". Anybody looking for shocking revelations will be disappointed-he admits to still being starstruck and "liked, almost without exception, the great ones of the cinema". He's known-some of them, Flashman fans, for instance Charlie Chaplin, Burt Lancaster, who'd have "tried to dominate the Duke of Wellington", and Charlton Heston (I suspect that he regards P.G.Wodehouse's being a Flashman fan as his greatest compliment!). Meeting Ernest Borgnine was "like shaking hands with a friendly gorilla". He knew Oliver Reed both at his best and his worst but always with "that rare quality-style." Of meeting the greater Oliver (Hardy) he says "Memories don't come any better." And the advantage of writing for Steve McQueen was that he often preferred "looking" lines to saying them!

Fans of the Beverly Hillbillies will probably be surprised by his revelation about Buddy Ebsen (I know I was!) - and fellow-contributors can take heart from his advice to would-be journalists. Succinctly-to learn the trade by doing it!

I highly recommend this book. All of his anecdotes are interesting, many of them humorous. And, fellow-McAuslan fans-we get the true story of Wee Wullie!

***British Historical Cinema* - edited by Claire Monk and Amy Sargeant (2002, Routledge) (Reviewed by Mark Taha).**

The title's self-explanatory, I wish I could recommend it but it's too intellectual and PC for my taste, Jeffrey Richards does these things a lot better! One thing I can say for it is that there's an excellent bibliography at the end of each chapter. The chapters include a lot

of information, of course - but not put across in a lively enough way. Each chapter's being by a different writer may help explain it.

I'd no idea that there had been silent biopics of Nelson, one of them approved by Mark Kerr, "Britain's most famous Admiral" in 1919 - anyone heard of him? Writer Stephen Bourne, a specialist in this field laments the lack of black characters in British historical films - but, while I yield to no man in my admiration for her voice, I still don't think Shirley Bassey would have been a good choice as Nancy in *Oliver!* My favourite chapter's on those classics "The History of Mr Polly" and "The Card" - about the spiritual ancestors of Reggie Perrin and Del Trotter! However, a serious article on historical Carry On films is not a good idea; why can't people just laugh?

***Introducing Rex Milligan* by Anthony Buckeridge. ISBN 0952148277 Price £12.00 plus £1.00 post and packing. Available direct from the publisher: David Schutte, 119 Sussex Road, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU31 4LB. Reviewed by Norman Wright.**

While the name Jennings immediately conjures up memories of schoolboy adventures at Linbury Court School, the name Rex Milligan is probably less well known. Yet Anthony Buckeridge, creator of both characters, wrote 38 short Rex Milligan stories for *Eagle* during the early 1950s and sixteen of them have remained forgotten and uncollected until now, when David Schutte, publisher of the on-going series of Jennings radio plays, has rescued them from obscurity and published them as a quality paperback book entitled, "Introducing Rex Milligan", with a splendid, full-colour wrap-around cover and two internal black and white illustrations by Val Biro in the style of 'Maz', who illustrated the stories in *Eagle*.

In the introduction to the volume Anthony Buckeridge explains how the stories came to be written, and story paper and comic enthusiasts will find this fascinating. The author liked the look of *Eagle* but thought that the weekly should have more text stories and wrote to Marcus Morris suggesting that he should submit a series of two thousand word stories for Morris' consideration. The editor agreed to the proposal and Anthony Buckeridge set about creating the lead characters of his new series - Rex Milligan and his friend, Jigger Johnson. Marcus Morris liked the stories and the first one, inevitably entitled, "Introducing Rex Milligan", appeared in the *Eagle* dated 12 October, 1951. In all thirty-eight Rex Milligan stories appeared in *Eagle* between October 1951 and June 1953.

When asked about these stories in later years Anthony Buckeridge believed that they had all been incorporated into one or other of the four Rex Milligan books: "Rex Milligan's Busy Term" (1953), "Rex Milligan Raises the Roof" (1955), "Rex Milligan Holds Forth" (1957) and "Rex Milligan Reporting" (1961), and until a matter of months ago nobody bothered actually to check the stories in *Eagle* with those that made up the books. But when Buckeridge aficionado Peter Hicks did that recently he discovered, to his delight, that sixteen of the tales had never been re-used and were, therefore, unknown to the majority of Buckeridge enthusiasts.

The Rex Milligan stories are very evocative of the early 1950s. Rex and Jigger inhabit an England of sweet coupons and bombsites, steam locos and button B phone boxes. At any moment the reader expects PC49 to appear round the corner and his

counterpart certainly does in a number of the stories. They have that wide-eyed, fifties innocence, when kids wandered the streets and played on bomb-sites without fear of molestation, and thumbing a lift home was done as a matter of course. It is a very reassuring world where the crooks come quietly without bleating about their 'human rights' and Rex and Jigger invariably get home in time for tea.

The sixteen stories in this volume are a varied bunch that introduce the reader to Rex Milligan's world. In the course of their adventures Rex and Jigger run into all manner of small-time crooks: food coupon forgers rub shoulders with lorry thieves, false 999 callers, cat burglars - in the most literal sense - and a host of petty thieves, worthy of any Alan Stranks PC49 script!

I have no hesitation in recommending this book. Not only is it pleasing to see a 'new' volume by Anthony Buckeridge, but as this is the first book in decades to be drawn directly from *Eagle* it deserves the support of every story-paper and comic enthusiast in the land.

TREACHERY AND CLASS DISTINCTION AT CLIFF HOUSE ---
and a few questions
by Margery Woods

September traditionally sees the end of the summer break and the return to Cliff House for the new term. The Chums, having yearned for the hols a few weeks earlier usually turned up quite happily to slip back into the very special atmosphere of the old school and renew acquaintanceship with old friends. Old enemies were greeted with wary politeness and new faces scanned with curiosity.

A new term usually brought new girls, who naturally fell into the category of unknown quantities. Invariably they proved to be never quite what they seemed. Some appeared charming, but this façade often cracked as the term wore on. Some came with high ambitions for power, others were rebellious, some with ulterior motives which boded ill for any who crossed them, and sadly, some were born to be victims. All in turn darkened the doors of Cliff House to bring conflict that enlivened the new term, and it usually fell to Barbara Redfern to help, advise, protect and cope with—or become a victim herself. There was rarely a term went by when Babs did not have to cope with the angst caused by treachery or snobbery.

Two examples of these themes occur in two stories chosen almost at random from the close on a thousand Cliff House stories penned for the SCHOOL FRIEND and SCHOOLGIRL. The first story is sound, well written and convincing on a basic plot used so often that most people will instantly recognise it.

The second example is dramatic and appealing, though in true tear-jerker style with all the stops out, guaranteed to cause lumps in the throats of the more tender-hearted among young readers. But the basis on which this plot is hung could cause adult readers to question the soundness of motives on which the story depends.

The first story is entitled: ONLY BABS COULD CONTROL HER, from THE SCHOOLGIRL 527. It features Lydia Crossendale, no stranger to snobbishness and a

Back at Cliff House for a new term with all your old favourites—and an unusual new girl. Meet Thalia Pascoe in this Grand Long Complete story.



Only BABS COULD CONTROL HER!

strong defender of class distinction, and a new girl called Thalia Pascoe. Thalia is a striking looking girl who has been brought up with gipsies and allowed to run wild. But she is possessed of great talents and has come to the notice of Miss Primrose, who has decided that Thalia would be an asset to her pet project of charitable homes for orphans. But first Thalia needs to absorb the discipline she has never experienced during her gipsy life and Miss Primrose has requested Babs to take Thalia under her wing and, in plain English, smooth some of the corners off her.

Miss Charmant brings the new girl to the tuck shop where Babs and the chums have just arrived back from the holiday camp, to be giped by Lydia, who went to Egypt, not a cheap holiday camp. The word 'gipsy' of course really sparks off Lydia, who proceeds to show that she is anything but a lady despite her privileged upbringing and Thalia, before Babs can intervene, shows her annoyance in no uncertain way. Result, lines all round from Rona Fox, an unpopular prefect, who doesn't seem to think much of gipsies either. So the scene is set for many a showdown and a ton of trouble for Thalia, who is very anxious to prove herself worthy of Primmy's interest.

Stolen or exchanged babies have provided plots for centuries, from grand opera---*Il Trovatore*---through drama, films, fiction, even real life, and Cliff House was no exception.

Just to underline the plot and provide a clue to budding young Sherlocks among the readers Thalia has a butterfly shaped birthmark on one shoulder, revealed during her first display of swimming strength. There is also a gold locket which is Thalia's most treasured possession, and which Lydia hides, causing more ructions. Lydia becomes more and more vengeful, aided by Rona Fox, who seems to have her own motive for seeing Thalia

dispatched from Cliff House. Things come to a head when Thalia inadvertently gets Lydia threatened with expulsion, but it is not Lydia who has stolen the precious locket. Between them, Babs, Mabs and Clara trick Rona into believing they have found the locket in her study and snatch it from her when she rushes to the real hiding place. The dramatic wind-up comes in Primmy's study (how does that poor lady's nervous system stand all the dramatic denouements that take place in her study?) when Rona's part in the mystery is shown. For Thalia is actually Rona's cousin, the daughter who had wandered away as a toddler during a camping holiday and never been found. Of course the locket and the birthmark prove her identity and Rona's expectations from her uncle grow dimmer by the moment. It is not quite clear how Rona becomes so suspicious of Thalia's effect on her own life but whatever her premonitions they are proved right.

The second story, **THE TESTING OF JUNE MERRETT**, from **THE SCHOOLGIRL** is on a similar theme of spite, snobbery and inheritance but raises more questions. The accompanying illustration from the previous issue tells the obvious theme of the story but omits the real story behind the musical ambition and Rosa's possessive attitude—like Diana she seeks reflected glory from her star-making efforts. June's mother has arrived at Cliff House as a cook, unbeknown to anyone. June's guardian, her Uncle Daniel, is very rich, but cruel enough to have cut his own brother off without a shilling after he had married June's mother against his wishes; she wasn't good enough for his family. Soon after June's birth the brother, June's father, dies and her mother is penniless. She strives hard to support her child but at a very bad time she resorts to theft to buy food, is caught and sent to prison for six weeks. One of the magistrates on the Bench is Daniel himself, and when June's mother comes out of prison she finds he has claimed the child and offers to provide luxury for her provided her mother disappears from her life, only to assume

SUCCESS—FAME—FORTUNE! At last June Merrett sees them within her grasp. And it is Rosa Rodworth who can bring her musical dreams gloriously true. So Rosa means to do—until the arrival at Cliff House of the new cook. At once, Rosa makes an enemy of the woman, never realising that she is...

JUNE'S LONG-LOST MOTHER!

Thus, the girl who can bring June life-long fame, plunges her into a terrible quandary. For June has to choose between her mother and her career. There you have the brief theme of—

Don't miss this
enthralling
LONG
COMPLETE
STORY
of the

**Chums of Cliff
House School**

by

**HILDA
RICHARDS.**

It appears next
Saturday.



guardianship of her daughter if he dies.

Now why does he do this? Is it guilty conscience for the way he treated his own brother? And was this really the cause of a good, hard-working woman losing everything? When he is introduced into the story he is described as hard and grim-faced and does not recognise his own sister-in-law. He merely remarks that she reminds him-of someone. (Though Mrs Winslow (her maiden name) has admitted she has changed). He then asks Miss Primrose coldly: "Where did you get her?...I wouldn't trust her too far." No indication of any remorse in his nature. So why did he want his dead brother's child? A son, perhaps, for a rich and powerful man, but a baby daughter to bring up?

Then there is the question of the names. Where did the Merrett come from? The uncle is Daniel Dane, did his brother have a different name? And was the mother so unrecognisable? Rosa had spotted the resemblance and done her spiteful best to get Mrs Winslow sacked. In a rather hurried wind-up a solicitor arrives to tell June that Uncle Daniel has been killed in an accident the previous evening. And June is his heir.

Both these stories are attributed to John Wheway, who was usually very careful with answers, reasons and logic, but left a lot unanswered in this one.

And yet, is it fair to criticise from the point of view of adults the work of our favourite authors? Remembering that children look for action and excitement, not logic and legal points. So should we suspend disbelief as readily as in childhood, remembering only the joy of a story so paced in the writing and engaging of our emotions that we identify whole-heartedly with the leading character and turn the pages too eagerly to pause and question the whys and wherefores of the adults in the story? But perhaps as children we were wiser, with the subconscious wisdom to realise that, if the author took short cuts to save the characters too much unhappiness before it all came right in the end, the story might not have been worth writing after all. For the art of exciting fiction lies in conflict, the fight to achieve an aim, either for good or evil, and the battle to win that fight.

What do our readers of C.D. think? Should adults criticise too harshly something aimed at children? Literary pundits often tend to sneer, particularly at authors who are adored by young readers---and often their parents. After all, it's just snobbery..... Isn't it?

Margery's holiday competition. The holiday choice of the Chums was to Aunt Judy's home---despite Coker. The title to be COKER'S TREASURE HUNT. Unfortunately no correct entry was made (I thought everyone enjoyed Coker's escapades!), but some interesting comments were received about the other choices. However, it has been decided to award the story to Ray Hopkins for his sheer cheek in saying he would like *all* the stories to be written. Our Editor has promised to try to find space to publish them eventually and Margery will write them all in due course.

WANTED: Nelson Lees – any series. Lists and prices to Jack Wilson, 19 Dunbeath Avenue, Rainhill, Prescot, L35 0QH.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME
The history of the picture strip in D C Thomson's 'Big Five'
Part 7 : Adventure 1949-1951
by Ray Moore

In Sept 1949 both 'Adventure' and 'Rover' expanded their page size to make them uniform with their companion titles 'Wizard' and 'Hotspur' and for the first time 'Adventure's resident sleuth Dixon Hawke graced the paper's front page in a picture strip.

In 'Dixon Hawke and the Yellow Ghost' (1286-1297) drawn by **James Malcolm**, Hawke and his assistant Tommy Burke are in San Francisco on the trail of the eponymous villain of the piece, an oriental master criminal clad in a literal cloak of invisibility. Hawke here locking horns with an adversary that might have been new to him but certainly not to loyal readers of 'Adventure'. The original appearance of 'The Yellow Ghost' having occurred in 1943 (1081-1094) when as a spy for the Japanese he had once again made San Francisco the base for his operations but on this occasion pitting his wits against Commander 'Dumpy' Blyth of British Naval Intelligence.

Stories of Robin Hood and those he helped defy the yoke of Norman tyranny are legion in the realms of boy's fiction and in 1933 'Adventure' had added to the literature with 'Fighting Hal of Sherwood' (592-609) and, sixteen years later, that story became the basis of a picture strip with the same name (1298-1309). Illustrated by **Pete Sutherland** it tells of a young lad, befriended by Robin Hood, who works as a blacksmith on the outskirts of Sherwood Forest. The lad not being aware that the tattoo he bears on his chest is the key to him acceding to an earldom if, in the meanwhile, the Norman usurper who currently holds the title doesn't kill him first.

Although 'Adventure' had published its first picture strip in 1946 one of its most prominent stars, the leopard-skin clad jungle hero, Strang the Terrible had already appeared in picture strip form some two years earlier in the pages of the 'Beano' comic. Firstly, in a one-off meeting with Jimmy and his Magic Patch (233) and then in a full series of his own (240-253) both drawn by the great **Dudley Watkins**. The joint war-time editorship of 'Adventure' and 'Beano' by full time 'Adventure' editor **Stuart Gilchrist** explaining the two titles' occasional cross-fertilisation and also the colorization and recycling of the 'Beano' Strang strip for use as a cover strip in 'Adventure' six years later



(1310-1327). The strip itself being a fairly faithful retelling of the first Strang story ever to appear in 'Adventure' in 1936 (775-792) in which, in the Valley of the Giants in a remote region of South America, Strang encounters the time-locked inhabitants of the city of Goz.

The use of tattooed flesh as an indelible means of relaying a message, whether it be a customised 'birthmark', as it was in the previously mentioned 'Fighting Hal of Sherwood', or indicating the location of something of value as it would in the next 'Adventure' picture strip 'Six Scalps for the Lost Totem' (1328-1342) was a tried and trusted plot device in the Thomson boy's papers.

In this strip, drawn once again by **James Malcolm**, the hunt is on for the Golden Totem Pole of the Poctaw Indians with the clues to its whereabouts having been inconveniently tattooed on the scalps of six living white men, the hunters being a redskin Mountie called Red Oak, who wants to see the totem restored to its rightful owners, and his treacherous self-serving cousin Long Lance. The basic script, certainly for the first half of its length, having been culled from a 1938 'Adventure' story with a very similar title 'Six Scalps for the Lost Totem Pole' (876-891).

Once Red Oak had overcome his cousin and restored the totem to the Poctaw Indians the 'Adventure' cover strip stayed in the West to give us the outlawed cowboy hero. Lone Wolf, in a picture story titled The Outlaw Sheriff (1343-1358). Like the Strang the Terrible strip already covered, this was another strip that had found its way to 'Adventure' following an earlier appearance in the 'Beano' (188-199) and was once again, for the most part, drawn by **Dudley Watkins** with four new episodes tacked on at the end drawn by **Pete Sutherland** (1355-1358). (It's also worth pointing out here that when both the 'Strang the Terrible' and 'Lone Wolf' picture strips were reprinted in 'Adventure' **Dudley Watkins** appended his signature to them, or his initials at least, something which, in their original 'Beano' printings they'd lacked. This being a retroactive example of the artist exercising his right to sign all his work, a right which hadn't been contractually agreed till 1946.)

As far as the storyline in 'The Outlaw Sheriff' is concerned it seems to have had no direct, single textual antecedent on which it was based even though it does contain elements of plot and characterisation for which there do seem to be resonances elsewhere. For example another sheriff who is framed for murder and who is also dubbed 'the outlaw sheriff' appears in 'Green Mask on the Run' in the 'Wizard' in 1935 (632-646) and a character named Lone Wolf is to be found in the 1938 'Adventure' series 'The Silent Gunman Rides Alone' (881-890) and even the outlawed lawman's four-legged canine companion White Fangs may hark back, for his name at least, if not quite to **Jack London**, then to 'Whitefangs - Leader of the Pack' in 'Adventure' in 1936 (751-762). Indeed there is even the possibility that the title 'the outlaw sheriff' sprang from the original writers acquaintance with the true story of **Henry Plummer** (1837-1864) lawman at various times of both Virginia City and Bannack, Montana. He being the original 'outlaw sheriff' of US folklore but no wronged hero as in the tale under discussion here. Rather instead a consummate villain who, despite his badge, murdered and robbed his way through his short and violent life until he met his end at the end of a lynch mob's rope.

In 1946 'Adventure' had launched its series of cover strips with 'The Human Eagles' starring a new hero to the papers' pages, Congo King, the greatest hunter and rifle shot in Africa, and his companion the mighty Zulu warrior Umtala. The pair subsequently returning to appear in another strip 'The Lost Legion'. Now, four and a half years after

their debut it was time for their third jungle romp simply titled 'Congo King' (1359-1370). Illustrated, as had been the first two series, by **James Malcolm** this was a formulaic tale of King and Umtala finding a lost tribe in a hidden land ringed by lofty mountains and, once there, helping the young heir to the throne of the tribe topple a usurping tyrant.

When this third outing for Congo King came to an end he was replaced by a king of an altogether different sort, the dapperly dressed circus ape 'King Kong Charlie' (1371-1390) drawn by **Pete Sutherland**. Charlie, impeccably dressed in his natty suit with bowler hat, white gloves and walking cane is the circus ape par excellence and with some help from his young trainer Ginger he has become the star attraction of Garson's Circus in the USA. Sadly for Charlie his act attracts the attention of an unscrupulous Aussie showman and the strip has hardly begun before Charlie and Ginger are both kidnapped and find themselves on board a ship bound for Australia. A life of performing Down Under only spared Charlie when the ship he and Ginger are travelling on founders in a storm. A plot twist that sees them plunged into a series of precarious adventures on the South Sea Island where they are washed ashore.

For an earlier version of this tale it is tempting to turn to the text story with the same title that appeared in the 'Beano' in 1944 (222-23 5) especially bearing in mind that editor of 'Adventure' **Stuart Gilchrist** was also editor of the 'Beano' at the time and also as it features a circus ape in the USA but surprisingly that is where the comparison ends. The earlier maybe inspiring the latter but certainly no more than that.

With King Kong Charlie and Ginger eventually rescued from their tropical isle Strang the Terrible returned. Not this time in a reprinted strip but in a new one with a basically new script titled 'Strang in the Underworld' (1391-1402) drawn by **James Malcolm**.

The Underworld in this strip is not that through which Orpheus travelled to find Euridyce but the residence of a tribe of 'underworlders' who inhabit the city of Tramo and who in desperation kidnap Strang from the surface in the hope that he will help them defeat their sworn underworld enemies, the aggressive, dome-headed dwarves from the neighbouring city of Ukor equipped for conquest with their bubble-shaped flying machines.

Since the appearance of 'The Black Slink-the Shadow Spy' in 1949 'Adventure' hadn't deigned to feature more than one picture strip per issue but now all that was to change with 'The Human Torpedo' (1398-1412), the first of a series of regular black and white strips in the papers' centre pages.

Up until now all 'Adventure' cover strips had been printed with any text deemed necessary to explain the accompanying illustrations with the text embodied within the framework of the pictures themselves but now, for its internal strips, it reverted to the traditional Thomson method of picture strip storytelling with each picture placed above a block of elucidating text.

'The Human Torpedo', as mentioned, was the first of these regular internal strips and was set during World War II. It told of a game of cat and mouse between the commander and crew of a British destroyer and the pilot of a Nazi midget submarine, the eponymous anti-hero of the title. This strip being the artistic responsibility of two separate artists **Pete Sutherland** (1398-1400), who left Thomson's to go freelance before it was completed, and **George 'Dod' Anderson** (1401-1412). The strip being a fairly reasonable translation of an

KING SOLO the FIRST



Solo Solomon was in a South American Republic, not as a visitor, but as a King! Solo was the exact double of King Manuel and he had been brought to the royal palace to impersonate the missing monarch. At his first audience, Solo used his lip-reading powers to find out if anyone suspected his deception.

KING SOLO WAS BOWED INTO THE THRONE-ROOM BUT, WHEN ABOUT TO TAKE HIS SEAT—



HIS LIP-READING GIFT ENABLED HIM TO "OVERHEAR" A STRANGE REMARK.



SOLO STRODE TOWARDS GENERAL CARLOS, THE OFFICER WHO HAD SPOKEN, THEN—



HE ORDERED THE MAN, TO SIT DOWN ON THE THRONE IN HIS PLACE.



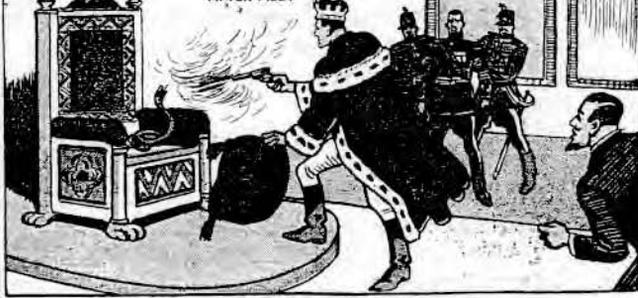
THE GENERAL MADE A BOLT FOR IT, BUT SOLO'S SHARP-SHOOTING STOPPED HIS FLIGHT.



APPROACHING THE THRONE CAUTIOUSLY, SOLO REMOVED THE ORNATE CUSHION AND—



THERE HE FOUND A DEADLY SNAKE READY TO STRIKE. BEING KING OF SAN ROSARIO WAS PERHAPS NOT TO BE SUCH A SOFT JOB AFTER ALL!



Next week, King Solo helps the revolutionaries to plan his own death!

'Adventure' text tale from 1940 with the same title (959-975) even if the order in which some events take place do differ one from the other.

In the issue following the first appearance of 'The Human Torpedo' yet another picture strip debuted in the pages of 'Adventure'. A series of usually single issue mystery tales with individual titles under the banner headline 'Dixon Hawke' (1399-1418). Drawn by Thomson art dept newcomer **Calder Jamieson** and printed in full colour on the paper's rear cover the scripts for these strips are so perfunctory as to defeat any serious attempt to

extrapolate any comparison between them and any earlier, more complex, tales featuring Hawke.

Once Strang the Terrible's trip to the Underworld was satisfactorily concluded it was the turn of another 'Adventure' old hand to return and grace the front page in a picture strip for a second time, namely the wandering western lawman Solo Solomon in a tale titled 'King Solo the First' (1403-1418) another strip, like 'The Human Torpedo' that featured the work of two separate Thomson staff artists, the veteran **Jack Gordon** (1403,1404) and new boy **Calder Jamieson** (1405-1418).

In this strip Solo is rescued from a Mexican prison, where he is being held on a trumped up murder charge, and taken by tramp steamer to the small kingdom of San Rosario where he is given the task of impersonating the kingdom's missing ruler King Manuel to whom he bears an uncanny resemblance, Solo's deception being vital if San Rosario is not to fall into the hands of rebel leader General Carlos before the real monarch can be found.

This strip being a reasonably true adaptation of a story with the same title that had appeared in 'Adventure' in 1941 (1016-1027) which itself had been a slightly modified version of an even earlier story 'His Majesty Solo Solomon' that had appeared in 'Adventure' in 1933 (592-603). Both, I suspect, in their turn owed something to the novel 'The Prisoner of Zenda' by **Anthony Hope**.

'King Solo the First' was the last new strip to begin in 'Adventure' in 1951 and so it is time to take our leave of the paper's picture strip stars for the time being. A short respite before we return to catalogue the exploits of the super-villain the Electric Shadow and travel the spaceways for the first time with Nick Swift of the Planet Patrol

In closing just to add that I'd like once again to thank Derek Marsden for the tremendous help he's provided in the preparation of this article. Not only for pointing out earlier text versions of the strips in question, where they exist, but for also providing a plethora of smaller details relating to name changes and nuances of plotting and characterisation and much else. I know of no one, either in general or in the particular, that has Derek's all encompassing grasp of the literature that was, and is, the D C Thomson boys' story papers.

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RIVALS FOR THE GREYFRIARS' TREASURE

by Ray Hopkins

The fat owl, groping hopefully in an ivy-covered cavity in the cloister walls for a box of choocs snaffled from Horace Coker, finds instead a mouldy old piece of parchment later discovered, not by him, to contain the whereabouts of the Greyfriars Abbey gold hidden from the thieving and malicious King Henry VIII.

Bunter completely flummoxes the Remove and the Famous Five in particular by his sudden interest in Latin. He doesn't make the mistake of actually showing them the parchment but from judicious quizzing which fools the wily fat owl they discover he is anxious to fill in an indecipherable word on some mysterious clue or other he has found regarding the Greyfriars' treasure. Johnny Bull doubts the existence of such a treasure and inserts his objections to any search on every positive occasion, considerably annoying the other members of the Famous Five. Wharton and Co., more adept at Latin, are able to translate the information. The parchment, faded and stained, had been written by a Brother John to his Superior Abbott informing him that he had buried the gold to the west of the trunk of the tall oak at a distance of three cubits (9 or 10 feet). The tall oak is - and here followed the obliterated word consisting of six spaces, as Wharton points out.

The choc provider, hearing of Bunter's find, purloins the parchment, convincing himself that an astute, older person such as himself is more qualified to follow directions in Latin than a stupid lower-form fag. But even Coker with his, as he alone believes, monumental intelligence, is unable to fathom the exact spot near the spreading oak where brother John deposited the box of gold. As luck would have it, time and weather had removed the magic word which provided the incisive answer to "where is it buried?" Stands to reason, the great man says to his hamper-eyeing study mates, he wouldn't be daft enough to lug a heavy box of gold too far from the abbey which had been where the school building now stands. He looks around and points excitedly to the large oak in the vicinity that overlooks Gosling's tool shed and commands the far from amiable Potter and Greene to start digging, the tools borrowed without permission from Gosling.

Harry Wharton and Co., urged on by Bunter to put an end to Coker's stealing his (Bunter's) treasure, are amused to see Coker and Go, ordered to desist by Gosling. Surmising that the Fifth Formers will return later to finish the job, they hasten to construct an ancient looking container which they fill and cover with a mixture of chalk and earth so that Coker and Co. will not be disappointed by finding nothing. Sure enough the box is dug up, none of the three Fifth Formers noticing that the box does not look ancient enough, nor the many nails in its lid unshiny enough to have been hammered in four hundred years previously. Coker bears it in triumph to his study where he opens it in front of his disbelieving form master. Inside, beneath chunks of chalk, stones and old bricks, is a sheet of cardboard on which is written TRY AGAIN, COKER!

The following day in class, Bunter's mind wanders to the whereabouts of brother John's oak and to the amount of tuck he will be able to glory in when he finds the gold. Mr. Quelch, noticing his blinking, wandering eyes and his ever-so-slightly moving head, realises that his most obtuse pupil is not paying attention and calls upon him to construe. Then follows another of Bunter's delightful howlers in which, from the second book of the Aeneid, he deduces that the Tenedos mentioned in the text, must be the name of a person.

**FRANK
RICHARDS**

BILLY BUNTER'S TREASURE HUNT

**BILLY
BUNTER'S
TREASURE
HUNT**



28

CASSELL

FRANK RICHARDS

Mr. Quelch awards him two hundred lines to be written in Latin and English, as follows: "Tenedos est insula; Tenedos is an island."

Coker, too, has been ruminating about that missing space in the parchment wherein a word of six letters would fit. Mr. Prout, dozing on a seat in Dr. Looke's garden, is startled into complete wakefulness by hearing his most obtuse pupil - Mr. Quelch is not alone in having one of these - suddenly shout the word HORTUS and make him jump for a second time as he explains to Potter and Greene that "Hortus" is Latin for "Garden." A final shock for the listening Fifth Form master is to hear Coker state that the tall oak that shelters Coker and Co. on one side of the garden wall and their form master on the other must be the one on brother John's parchment. Coker adds that he intends to dig up the Head's lawn and hand over the gold to him. Mr. Prout considers this to be his cue to take

centre stage. Raising his head above the wall he informs the treasure hunter that he will be flogged if he so much as sets foot in the Head's garden.

Bunter, dreading having to spider his way across impot paper, talks Bob Cherry into giving him a hand. He hopes Bob's good nature will produce all two hundred lines. But Bob says that he'll do one hundred but no more. He finishes his half while Bunter is still grumbling his way through twenty-five. Cherry's eyes wander over the hundred lines that he has produced. He notes that Insula and Island both contain six letters. A mental bell rings inside his head. Is it possible that fate has guided him to the true identity of the missing word? Bob thinks of Popper's Island in the River Sark and the fact that there is one very high oak tree on it. It is highly likely that Brother John would have considered the oak on the island a much safer hiding place than any of the many large oaks growing in the grounds of the Abbey.

While Bunter delivers the two hundred lines to Mr. Quelch, Bob goes to the boathouse and is seen by Coker to put a spade in the boat he intends to row to Popper's Island. Coker asks for Bob what the object is for in his boat. "That's an agricultural implement, Coker." Coker, whose short way with fags is legendary, smacks Bob's head for his cheek. Bob knocks him over with his oar and hastens to pull away leaving just enough space for Coker to fall into the Sark as he attempts to jump into Bob's boat. Cherry decides to let Bunter make his own way to the island and heads off by himself.

The fat owl, arrives at the landing stage to accompany Bob at the same time as Coker, now in dry clothes, sees that Cherry is not there and begs a lift to Popper's Island. In the way that Bunter has of believing that he is giving nothing away, Coker finds out what Cherry was going to use the spade in his boat for and sets off in what we used to call post haste, which type of haste sadly no longer exists in real life! Bunter is left flat on his back and gasping for breath as a consequence of a mighty shove from his rival of the fifth.

Bob Cherry on the island measures "three cubits distant from the trunk to the west" with the aid of a compass and begins to dig. He had dug through earth and stones down to chalk when the tell-tale bump of a boat on landing stage alerted him to the fact that the island had another visitor. Coker emerges through the trees and tells Bob he's going to thrash him for his wetting after which he can witness the hefty Horace dig up the treasure, Bob eludes Coker's grasp and climbs up into the high oak.

Bunter alerts Wharton, Nugent, Bull and Inky that Coker has gone off in pursuit of Cherry. This is the first that they had heard of Bob's having deduced from Bunter's impot that Brother John's high oak might be the large one on the island. They all pile in a boat in pursuit of the pursuer. While the Famous Five handle the massive Coker, Bunter jumps down into the hole and continues to dig. Coker is thrown unceremoniously into his boat and disappears downstream. The fat owl stops digging and lets the others get on with it when they return to the excavation. Great excitement obtains when Wharton makes the first discovery: the remains of a rusty old lock! Almost at once an ancient oak box "eighteen inches by ten or twelve" is revealed by his spade work. A single gold coin is flung up by another spadeful. "The figure of a knight in armour slaying a dragon was revealed - the juniors knew it was a gold 'angel' of the reign of Henry VII or Henry VIII - a golden promise of what was to come when the chest was opened."

Wharton smashes in the lid with the spade while they all crowd round expectantly. "But no amount of gazing could discern a single gleam of a single spot of gold." Johnny

Bull, sardonic as ever, utters his most celebrated and hated statement. "I told you so;" he says.

It is typical of Bunter's luck that the story ends with his losing the one souvenir of the dig through a hole in his pocket somewhere between Popper's Island and Study No.1. He never recovers it. Sad! Alas, it is now too late for the inevitable sequel from the pen of the Master: "The Finding of the Treasure." You have the title. Competent sub-writer wanted.

("Billy Bunter's Treasure Hunt", Cassell Bunter Book No. 28, published 1961, provided the basis for the above article.)

FORUM

From GEOFF BRADLEY:

I enjoyed reading Derek Ford's piece on "A Rival For Sherlock" and the controversy over B. Fletcher Robinson's contribution to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. However I am not sure that he is correct when he says that Addington Peace, Robinson's detective is "a name unknown to detective fiction fans."

Indeed *The Chronicles of Addington Peace* is in print together with the first book publication of *The Trail of the Dead*, a chase adventure written by Robinson with J. Malcolm Fraser. The books are combined in a single volume which is published by The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box. The 260 page volume costs US\$28.00 in hard cover or US\$18.00 in wraps, plus postage, but payment can be made by sterling cheque. Enquiries can be made from The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, P.O. Box 204, Shelburne, Ontario, Canada LON ISO or by e-mail at <gav@bmts.com>. The book was reviewed in CADS 36.

From MARGERY WOODS:

I enjoyed Andrew Pitt's piece in June C.D. An interesting and entertaining voyage of discovery from a younger viewpoint on the joys of Hamiltonia. And Ray Hopkins' beautifully written treatise on a Morcove story. Yet another of those "stolen babies" plots. Ray's piece made me want to search for the Morcove story and read it.

From MARK TAHA:

I remember reading a "Gem" story in which, to help the egregious Skimpole out of a scrape, Tom Merry and Co. sold a place in the first team squad. A case of life imitating art – unless – I suppose there are Hamiltonians in Bury and I know there are Hamiltonian football fans. I wonder...

From TERRY JONES:

I recently bought a copy of *Bunter the Bad Lad*, one of four books published by Howard Baker under the title GREYFRIARS LIBRARY. They were reprints of *Schoolboys Owns*.

This particular one was from original *Magnets* 996, 1137 and 1016 in that order, the years being 1927, 1929 and back to 1927 again. The *Schoolboys Own* number was 237.

Much to my surprise and alarm, the taxi-driver asked for one pound, eighty pence fare from the Famous Five for the ride from Greyfriars to the Granada Cinema in Courtfield. Later on in the story Bunter had three five pence pieces in his pocket. He had previously offered a gipsy ten pence for a coconut but the gipsy demanded twenty.

Who was responsible for this stupid attempts to modernize the original writing? It's a disaster.

Can any of our C.D. readers let us know if the other three books suffered in this way? The change from "real" money to decimal currency destroys the whole charm of the stories. Imagine Bunter saying "I say, you fellows, can one of you lend me five pence?" instead of "a bob".

I tracked back in the original *Schoolboys Own* and found out that the taxi's fare was "five bob" and there was a fourpenny coconut for Bunter because that's all he had in his pocket. As for the admission to the cinema earlier on, Bunter had just a "bob" for that.

The Greyfriars Library was not a success and Howard Baker dropped the idea. I wonder if the use of decimal money was the reason.



BILLY BUNTER ABOUT
TO COME A CROPPER
DUE TO HIS OWN CARE-
LESSNESS IN THROWING
DOWN A BANANA SKIN.

B.W.

BEHIND THE COUNTER!

Our Special Reporter, TOM BROWN, chats with DAME MIMBLE, of tuckshop fame.

PERCHED on one of the high stools at the tuckshop counter, with my notebook on my knee, and a dish of jam tarts at my elbow, I chatted with the plump and matronly Dame Mimble.

"It must be great fun running a tuckshop," I suggested. "Nothing to do all day but dispense jam tarts to those that hunger, and ginger-pop to those that thirst. Why, it's the life of a lady of leisure."

Dame Mimble gave me a reproachful glare. "Nothing to do, indeed!" she exclaimed. "You know nothing about running a tuckshop, Master Brown. Why, I'm as busy as the day's long."

Even as she spoke, the worthy dame was vigorously churning ice cream in a barrel.

"In that case, ma'am," said I, "you want an assistant. I shall be pleased to act in that capacity for a salary of six doughnuts per day, and a strawberry ice whenever I happen to fancy one."

Dame Mimble shook her head.

"I've had enough of assistants," she said. "Once, in a moment of weakness, I agreed to let Master Bunter help in the shop. I told him he could help himself to an occasional tart, or a glass of ginger-beer, but he helped himself too fast and frequent for my liking. Why, the fat rascal ate me out of house and home."

"Ha, ha, ha! Just like Bunter!"

"It was no laughing matter, Master Brown. As fast as I made cakes Master Bunter tucked 'em away. I had to exhibit the 'SOLD OUT!' notice long before closing time came, and my customers were wild. I got rid of Master Bunter, and I'll never take on an assistant again—never!"

And Dame Mimble churned the ice cream quite viciously.



"Who is your best customer, ma'am?" I inquired.

"Lord Mauleverer," was the prompt reply. "His lordship spends pounds where others spend pence. He thinks nothing of spending a five-pound note on a study celebration. And once, on a very special occasion, he bought up my entire stock."

"My hat! And who is your worst customer?"

"Master Bunter and Master Skinner tie for that distinction. Master Bunter is always wanting credit. He doesn't seem to realise that this is a tuckshop—not a tickshop. As for Master Skinner, he's dreadfully mean and artful. When I was giving away free samples of ice cream the other day—one sample per customer—Master Skinner came back at least half a dozen times and each time he declared it was his first appearance. And he always waits till my cakes are stale before he buys them, because they drop to half price."

I was pondering on the meanness of Skinner by contrast with the liberality of Lord Mauleverer, when the tuckshop was suddenly besieged by an army of cricketers, and I was swept from my perch.

There was an impatient clamour of "Ice cream here!" and "Ginger-pop here!" and "Buck up, Mrs. Mimble!" And I squeezed my way out of the shop, leaving the tuckshop dame to her strenuous labours.

GREYFRIARS, NULLI SECUNDIS

by Ted Baldock

The wind is sighing in the elms,
The sun is sinking low,
Shade in those familiar realms
Moves stately, dim and slow.
The school house buildings sharply cut
The lurid western glow,
Old Gosling has the main gate shut,
The chapel bell rings low.
Along the dusky masters' walk
Gowned figures slowly pace
Wrapped in deep scholastic talk,
Beyond – the world may race.
Bob Cherry's cheery shout is heard
Among much other sound,
And then old Mauly's languid drawl
Hints that he's sofa bound.
Silently the Sark drifts on
'Neath willows gnarled and old,
Of summer scenes they've looked upon,
Great tales they could have told.
Of stirring deeds in skiff and punt,
Of 'duckings' richly sought
When one the other seeks to shunt
Swift vengeance has been sought.
Coker with stentorian roar
Ignores his chums' advice
The Famous Five tot up the score
He's ducked in half a trice.
So does the timeless saga roll
'Neath skies both blue and dark
Be it recorded on a scroll
School can be quite a lark.
Then let us sing the endless song
Which echoes down through time
And keep our end up firm and strong
In Friardale's bosky clime.
So long as Phoebe lights the east
And paints the western skies
Just so long will Greyfriars stand,
Still in our hearts held high.

* * * * *

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Incorporating
'SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN'



CHAOS IN CLASS

Read about this surprising episode in the grand long complete Cliff House School story which appears inside



The Schoolgirls' Own



**"FOR THE GOOD OF THE SCHOOL
WE MUST EXPOSE YOU!"**

(An incident from the grand long complete story of Betty Barton and the girls of Morcove School which appears in this issue.)

2^d

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