



The Greyfriars Gazette



NEWSLETTER No. 16

SUMMER 1975

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Dear Friars,

Publication of the SEASIDE CAPER signals the end of an eventful season; one that has seen remarkable developments in the progress of the Greyfriars Press. February produced the GHA 1920, one of the rarest of all collectors' items. March brought forth the Greyfriars Book Club, a landmark in our history. May saw the publication of the WORLD OF FRANK RICHARDS.

FROM THE FORMER 'WHITEFRIAR'

No doubt many readers will have seen notices of our Frank Richards' biography in the national press. For our part, we feel it is sufficient to quote a few short extracts culled from a longer feature by the doyen of all book reviewers, Eric Hiscock, distinguished commentator for the one and only organ of the book trade, THE BOOKSELLER. He writes:



"... could any bookman anywhere want better? A brisk compilation by W O Lofts and D J Adley, on the private and public life of that extraordinary man with the runaway pen ... Nothing is missing from this triumph of investigation ... For readers of all ages, in all walks of life, this book is a treasure-trove of information."

MR RISING-PRICE

All our readers will know, and we hope appreciate the efforts your Publishers have made to resist price increases over the past four years (one solitary rise over that period.)



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incorporating THE GREYFRIARS PRESS publishers Cables: Bakerbook London

Our stubborn refusal to contribute to inflation has been made in the teeth of wildly escalating production, distribution and storage costs.

Overall, between 100% and 200+% increases we have borne -- while our only increase to our readers over four years has amounted to approximately 15%!

But the time has come when we must pass on at least a small proportion of the extra charges levied against us.

Accordingly, from July 1, 1975 the price for all books on our Stock List must be £3.50 and the price for New Titles must be £3.90.

Meantime we will continue to subsidise postal/packing charges so that mailing costs remain constant at 30p per volume.



GREYFRIARS BOOK CLUB

The first volume from the Club, THE WORST BOY AT GREYFRIARS (Magnet Nos 879-888) has aroused great enthusiasm from members. To quote just a few:

Geoffrey Wilde of Leeds declares:

"The production is a triumph, reflecting the greatest credit on the taste, artistry and craftsmanship of all concerned. The shelf-case, the beautifully-decorated olive binding, the marbled end-papers, and the happy thought of including the photogravure plates of naval vessels given away with those papers of fifty years ago - all add up to a volume of real distinction which would grace any bibliophile's shelves. With such a launching, I can only hope your new Greyfriars Book Club will now go on from strength to strength."

Len Wormull of Romford, Essex, writes:

"Thank you for a truly magnificent edition. It must rank as the finest of all your publications.... And your 'follow-up' list comprises some of the all-time greats of the Greyfriars saga."

Landreth Leaper, Clifton Bristol:

"... this beautiful edition of the Wharton Rebel series ... you have really made it a thing of beauty certain to be a joy forever for the rest of my life. Congratulations on a magnificent achievement."



Our thanks to Friars Wilde, Wormull, Leaper -- and to the scores of others who wrote in similar vein.

ECHO FROM THE PAST

The famous and well-loved Greyfriars 'rhymester', G.R. Samways, who penned all those hundreds of wonderful poems for the Greyfriars Herald, Holiday Annual and Greyfriars Guide has a pertinent comment to make about the question of substitute authors, described by Loftis and Adley in WORLD OF FRANK RICHARDS. Commenting on the 'sub-writers' he says:

"Not all of them were trash, by any means. The stories by C M Down and Stanley Austin, and those written by me in the 1920's (as distinct from my juvenile stuff) were in the best MAGNET and GEM tradition. Hinton once told me I could keep all the adulatory letters which my stories produced, and I wish now that I had done so, for they gave the lie to the notion that readers were disappointed and dissatisfied. Three Editors in succession -- Hinton, Pentelow and Down -- commissioned my work, and were willing to take everything I wrote. (I never had a story rejected). Hinton, I admit, was biased in his opinion of my work; but Pentelow and Down were shrewd and experienced judges who would not have accepted inferior rubbish: and Down, in the 1920's, was constantly wiring to me for more stories.



HERBERT SKIMPOLE

However, all this is water under the bridge. As I say, the book is excellent. It is compact, extremely interesting, and well presented. Full marks to the Howard Baker Press ! "

A CALL FOR SEXTON BLAKE

A Blakian enthusiast, Mr. L. Berg of Wembley Park, Middx, suggests that the Criminals Confederation stories from the Union Jack be added to the Greyfriars Book Club series. The Confederation saga comprises fifty stories in all. Therefore they would have to be produced in five volumes in order to encompass the entire collection. We have promised Mr. Berg we will put the proposition to the readers. So, if all Sexton Blake aficionados willing to support such a Club venture will write to us we can see if the numbers are sufficient to make the project viable.



DILATORY FRIARS

We regret there may be some small delay in publication of the second Book Club volume, **LODER FOR CAPTAIN**. The printing is complete, but we are obliged to delay binding until more Pledges have been honoured. Although pro-forma invoices were despatched over a month ago a substantial minority have failed to respond. This is one of those all-too-familiar situations where the actions of the few spoil the pleasure of the many.



Therefore we do urge those dilatory Club members to honour their Pledges without any further delay. If not, they should write us immediately, and formally repudiate their undertakings. This way, at least, we will know exactly where we stand. We will then adjust our List accordingly and proceed with production without their participation. Final cut-off date will be June 30.

CONTACTS

From time to time, readers -- especially those overseas -- ask to be put in touch with other readers in their own localities. This we have done, and we believe some warm friendships have resulted. Consequently, we think it might be a useful service if, in future, we were to devote a small section of each issue of the Greyfriars Gazette to furthering such a worthy purpose. Therefore, if you wish to make contact with any fellow-Friars let us know and we will be pleased to insert an announcement under the appropriate heading, on the following lines:

"Mr X of Anytown wishes to establish contact with kindred spirits in his immediate area. Please write or phone."

Such comings-together might well result in new Greyfriars Clubs springing up in quite far-flung outposts of Friar-dom! In this context, mark your letter "Contact".



With kindest regards and all best wishes from the publisher and staff,

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to the publisher or a member of the staff. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned at the bottom right of the page.