

THE STORY

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PAPER

No. 30

Vol. 2

COLLECTOR

Articles of Interest to Collectors of British Boys' Periodicals of the Past



St. Jim's

Designed by W. H. ...
1948

The Story Paper Collector WHO'S WHO

No. 4: J. P. QUAINÉ

GREETINGS and congratulations are extended by *The Story Paper Collector* to its Australian "cobber" Quaine, who now takes his place in this illustrious gallery. According to *Bohemia*, the official organ of the Bread and Cheese Club of Melbourne, J.P.Q. is hailed as a "Blood and Thunder Merchant" (though "blood," like "dreadful," is an elastic and often misapplied term), a prowler of secondhand bookshops, who for over thirty years has been hunting for five-pound books for fourpence.

Never certain if he were collector or salesman, friend Quaine has a heart that is bound in half morocco with "book-lover" embossed on the spine. The congratulations of our very first sentence are for his pre-war efforts in *The Collector's Miscellany*, several special articles in the magazine supplements of Melbourne newspapers, and for the compiling of thirty talks on "Tales of Terror Tactfully Re-

Told" for the A.B.C.; to which can be added treasured testimonials from Librarian Pitt and the late C. J. Dennis.

"Q" is a pioneer or foundation stone of a hobby that binds men to their old loves—the story papers of their schooldays.

In his photograph in *Bohemia* Mr. Quaine is wearing a pleasant and natural smile which, the writer would not hesitate to claim, is a part of the "Q" service and a permanent fixture. It is to be hoped that Volume Two of *S.P.C.* will contain at least one contribution from this grand old hobby builder who has done everything except make money.

From the brief data to hand it is difficult to pay "Q" the full tribute that he undoubtedly deserves, but in Canada, the United States, and the British Isles we raise our glasses to a very noted Australian "Blood and Thunder Merchant," Joseph P. Quaine.

—H. R. C.



A Series of Short Articles About Our Contributors,
Collectors, and Readers : : Compiled by H. R. C.



The Story Paper Collector

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THREE FAMOUS GREYFRIARS STORIES

FROM the time when *The Schoolboys' Own Library* was launched, in 1925, until 1940, readers of school stories who were not satisfied by the fare served each week in *The Gem* and *The Magnet* found an ample supplementary source of supply in the two, later three, issues of the *Library* each month. True, these stories were reprints, but the youthful population who formed the bulk of the readers was constantly being replaced so that the reprinted stories would appear new. I wonder if, among the hundreds of stories in the *S.O.L.*, there were any that so stand out in readers' memories that they, above all others, will be eagerly sought for more than thirty years after the day of publication?

Before the advent of *The Schoolboys' Own* things were different. Then, what few school stories were published by the Amalgamated Press in monthly "Libraries" were usually in *The*

Boys' Friend Library and did not appear very frequently. Perhaps that is partly why these few are held dear in the memories of men, now well into their 'forties, who read them as boys.

I have had the privilege, through the kindness of Mr. C.F.F. Rickard of Vancouver, of reading three stories published during 1915-16 that are to this day not only remembered but eagerly hunted. All three were in *The B.F. Library*, and they are "The Boy Without a Name" (No. 288, January, 1915), "School and Sport" (No. 319, December, 1915), and "Rivals and Chums" (No. 328, March, 1916).

It might be well to mention that, although the title of this article refers to "Greyfriars" stories, actually the first and third of them deal mainly with Highcliffe School, only secondarily with Greyfriars, while the remaining story brings in not only Greyfriars and Highcliffe, but also St. Jim's, Rylcombe

Grammar School, Courtfield County Council School, and Rookwood.

WHAT manner of stories are they? Do they come up to the fame and glamour that they have gathered to themselves through the years? The answer to the latter question is, I would say, "Yes" as regards the first and third stories, while "No" is most fitting for the second. Whether either of the two, if issued in *The Schoolboys' Own Library* in, say, 1935, would have created more than usual interest is not so easy to say. But we can assert with confidence that the second of the three would have been a flop. If it attained any measure of success in 1915 it was because it followed in the wake of its fine predecessor, "The Boy Without a Name."

The latter story, and "Rivals and Chums," were both written by Charles Hamilton, which is sufficient proof that they are good reading. In addition they are of interest to Greyfriars fans because a leading part in both is taken by the boy who was first known as Arthur Clare, the "boy without a name," who proved to be Frank Courtenay. Frank has been to the fore in all stories involving Highcliffe during the years since 1915.

"The Boy Without a Name" starts off with the "smart set" of

Highcliffe lower school, headed by Cecil Ponsonby, in a very upset state because a scholarship boy, Arthur Clare, is coming to the school, and tells of the latter's adventures and misadventures, he being, to begin with, directed to Greyfriars by Ponsonby.

Eventually—and it is not my intention to present here a resumé of the story—it is proved that Arthur Clare is actually the son of Major Courtenay, a member of Highcliffe's board of directors, and a cousin of Ponsonby. The ship on which Clive, or rather Courtenay, and his mother were coming to England from India years before had foundered and he was the only survivor, rescued from an open boat by Captain Clive, who brought him up as his own son.

The reader might think that the coincidence of Frank coming to the school of which his father was a director, and saving him from mishap with a runaway horse, was a little stretched. But coincidences just as improbable have occurred in real life and been reported in the newspapers.

THE SECOND of the three stories, "School and Sport," as has been stated, very definitely is not by Mr. Hamilton, and my feeling is that the less said about it the better. Besides, I don't care to use in print the

kind of language it evokes. This yarn, like others presumably by the same writer, is in the main a report of a series of sports contests, without a sign of a plot, unless the activities of the Fair Play, Limited, group of no-goods headed by Ponsonby is considered to be one.

It is noticeable that an effort was made to have this story follow naturally "The Boy Without a Name" — Frank Courtenay plays a leading part.

THE THIRD story, "Rivals and Chums," tells of the backsliding of Rupert ("Caterpillar") de Courcy, who, having changed his ways after becoming a pal of Frank's, fails to remain "snatched like a brand from the burnin'" and returns to "doggy" ways. The climax comes when Courtenay, learning that the Caterpillar is in a gambling place

that is due to be raided by the police, hastens to warn him. They are both trapped in the building but escape by doing a Tarzan stunt out of a top-floor window into a nearby tree, following which de Courcy is completely and permanently snatched from the burnin'.

The first story and the third are, as they couldn't help but be, excellent reading, in the long-established "Frank Richards" tradition. "School and Sport" is not even passably fair. That is the considered judgment of this reader. Incidentally, it is known that Charles Hamilton regards "The Boy Without a Name" as his finest work (vide "Off the Beaten Track," by Roger Jenkins in *The Collectors' Digest* No. 8, August, 1947), and he should be a good judge of a story.

— W. H. G.



SLIPS THAT PASS

THE serial story that commenced in No. 1 of the new series of *The Greyfriars Herald* (November 1st, 1919) was "The Red Man's Trail," written by a "ghost" for Paul Pontifex Prout, Fifth Form Master at Greyfriars. It told of settlers crossing Oklahoma, which is

one of the United States of America. We quote from the first instalment: ". . . their tracks would be followed speedily by the great trunk line of the Canadian Atlantic and Pacific Railway." We never thought that Canada extended so far to the south!

PAPERS OF YEARS GONE BY

By H. R. C.

SOME time ago I chanced to glance through a few of my children's comics and story papers. Noting Billy Bunter and Sexton Blake in picture comic-strip form, and the stories, if one can call them stories, of boys with magic buttons or wands, india-rubber boys, boys with the strength of twenty men, and young Tarzans about twelve years of age, I shuddered and put them away.

My thoughts ran on the lines of comparing this "junk" with St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and St. Frank's, and perhaps Sexton Blake (as we knew him) and other old friends, reminding me of Henry Steele telling me that Bizet received something like twenty-five pounds for writing "Carmen," while someone made about ten thousand pounds out of a number like "Yes! We Have No Bananas!" It certainly does give one food for thought.

Rather than dwell on these present-day papers and their standards—papers which haven't even a decent name—I would like to write of some that I knew and appreciated when I was a youngster. I will also endeavour to touch on one or two that have not as yet received much

recognition in the pages of *The Story Paper Collector*.

In the comic field *The Rainbow*, *Puck*, *Playtime*, *Chuckles*, *Comic Life*, and *The Jester* took the lead. Their standard was extremely high and the value was exceptional. Others were *The Young Fairy*, *Wonderland Tales*, *Tiger Tim's Weekly*, and *The Butterfly*.

Story papers that were very popular were *All Sports*, *Football and Sports Favourite*, *Cheerio*, *Boys' Cinema*, and *Young Britain*. I well remember Newnes' *Pirate Library* and *Adventure Library*. Both sold at threepence and were a good book-length with a fine colored cover. *The Nick Carter Library*, also published by Newnes, was a grand little library and I spent many a penny or threepence on the various *Buffalo Bill* Libraries.

I suppose my main period was about 1918 to 1924, when *The Boys' Realm*, *Penny Popular*, and *The Greyfriars Herald* all reappeared. I do just remember, though a bit hazily, *The Dreadnought* and *Fun and Fiction* of a few years earlier.

Chums and *The Boy's Own Paper* were at that time very good, but they fell off as the years passed. *The Scout* was fine

in its general make-up and must have enjoyed, like all the others, a good circulation.

I WROTE the Amalgamated Press asking for information as to future policies, and also to suggest writing on the subject of characters that are, I imagine, their copyright. No reply was forthcoming.

Artist Arthur Jones, of *Thriller*, *Union Jack*, and *Nelson Lee* fame, received a letter of appreciation from my humble typewriter, and his secretary wrote me that he has long since given up the kind of work with which we were familiar.

I was hoping that we "old 'uns" might yet have seen some really good stuff put out once more by the publishing houses, but I am beginning to have grave doubts. In fact it becomes very clear that they are not going to do much about it.

So, excepting for the collections that are in existence in various parts of the world, it looks as though Jimmy Silver, the Cedar Creek chums, St. Frank's, Nelson Lee and Nipper, Calcroft School, and Jack, Sam, and Pete, to name only a few of the old favourites, are to be heard of no more.



TRAVERS POPE

ONLY recently I learned the name of the genius who used to do most of the inside illustrations for the Brett journals in the 'nineties, and all of the cuts in *The Halfpenny Surprise*. I happened to be looking over a volume of *Young England*, 1903, and saw the familiar style that I once admired. Each instalment bore the legend, "Illustrated by Travers Pope." This grain of knowledge may interest some of the "old 'uns."

The illustrations of the old boys' publications always had a

fascination for me. I have studied and compared various imprints of special pictures and discovered a lot of discrepancies, such as those which delight the souls of "highbrow collectors" when arguing about the fine points of more cultural but, on whole, less interesting "finds." After all, we of the Old Boys' Brigade share with the more portentous practitioners of the book-collecting cult appreciation for first pulls, wide margins, and original wrappers.

— J. P. QUAINÉ.

NOTES BY A READER

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THE QUESTION, "What was a 'penny dreadful?'" is asked by Herbert Leckenby in *Story Paper Collector* No. 18. It is a difficult question to answer. Several of the old publishers, on starting a new journal, claimed that their object was to combat the influence of pernicious literature. Brett did this, yet at one time he was connected with the Newsagents' Publishing Company, who issued some of the fiercest of "bloods." Did Brett experience a wave of purity or was it just a tactful business move?

He even went so far as to issue a semi-religious journal, *The Boy's Sunday Reader*, but after a year he cut out the *Sunday* and substituted *Weekly*.

It seems to me that Lytton set the fashion for highwayman tales and also that classic phrase, "It was a dark and stormy night." In my boyhood the highwayman was taboo, but I never heard of anyone denouncing "Paul Clifford" or stigmatizing it as "pernicious literature." I think a lot of it was a case of "give a dog a bad name and hang him."

As friend Leckenby says, "The heroes were always fine, honest,

clean-living boys, while the characters who smoked and were acquainted with low 'bookies' were known as 'bounders' and 'outsiders.'" That is perfectly true and these words of his recall to my mind some really fine fellows, such as Victor St. Clair in "The Tyrants of the School." Was there ever such a perfect gentleman as he? And the speech employed — it was a model of nicety and correctness. Slang had not then obtained the stranglehold it has today.

Then there was Jack Ford, the leader of the School in "The Lambs of Littlecote" — a fine masterful boy. And there was that vital personality, "Left-handed Jack, the Terror of the School," with that terrific "left" of his. I could name many more.

I READ with much interest the amusing article, "The Baker Street Irregulars," in *S. P. C.* No. 19. It recalls a similar thing about *Ally Sloper*. Many people were under the impression that Ally Sloper was a real person. This belief was encouraged by the editor of the paper, who even went so far as to send out members of the staff made up to impersonate Sloper and his

family. When the seaside tour started, a wagonette would be chartered and the whole Sloper family would drive off—presumably to the seaside.

I HAVE been going in for the classics a bit lately, giving Scott a run, and have read his "Kenilworth," "Redgauntlet," and "Rob Roy."

When I was young I liked my stories Scotch,
And really thought they were top-notch.

I used to think it was a joy
To read about good old Rob Roy.

"The Outlaw of the Highlands"
was

A favourite yarn of mine,
because

It dealt with one, Rob Roy
Macgregor,

Who was a most romantic figure.
The pictures, too, I did admire,
Drawn so well by H. Maguire.

When I no longer was a boy
I tried to get through Scott's
"Rob Roy."

I must confess I thought it dry;
I even had a second try.

Some day I'll have another look
And read the tale, by hook or
crook!

As already recorded (S.P.C. No. 29), I have succeeded in reading it, "by hook or crook." It was worth trying. I remember how I was urged as a boy to

read Scott or Lytton. But what I wanted was *The Boy's Standard* and that sort of thing.

INSPIRED by "Amateur Casuals" list of twelve favourite stories (S.P.C. No. 13) I have compiled a list of twelve tales which fascinated me most in the days of my youth. They are:

1. "Jack o' Clubs, or, The Goldsmith's Apprentice," by Charles Stevens. In *The Boy's Champion Journal*, 1889, but originally in *Young Gentlemen of Britain*, 1868.

2. "The Link Boys of Old London," by Vane St. John. *Boy's Champion Journal*, 1889, from *Sons of Britannia*, 1873.

3. "Tim Ne'er-do-well," by Vane St. John. *Boy's Standard*, 1892. First appeared in *Young Englishman*, 1872.

4. "Wallace, the Hero of Scotland." Author unknown. *Boy's Champion Journal*, 1889, from *Rover's Log*, 1872.

5. "The King of the Pampas," by James Borlase. *Boy's Champion Journal*, 1889. First appeared in *The Young Briton*, 1873.

6. "The Tyrants of the School," by Harold Whyte. *Boys of the Empire*, 1888.

7. "Edward the Martyr" and sequel. Author not known. *Boys of the Empire*, 1890.

8. "Jack o' the Mint," by Vane St. John. *Boy's Standard*, 1882.

9. "The Outlaw of the Highlands." Frank Mercer(?) *Boy's Standard*, 1891. First appeared in *The Young Briton*, 1872.

10. "The Wreckers of Black-rock Caves." Author unknown. *Boy's Comic Journal*, 1889.

11. "Colonel Blood." A Romance of Alsatia, by Frank Mercer. *Boy's Champion Journal*, 1891.

12. "The Ghosts at Castle Blaney." Author unknown. *Boys of England*, 1889.

I have endeavoured to place them as nearly as possible in the order of preference. There were many other stories which held my interest, but these twelve are pre-eminent.

HERE IS a little sketch inspired by "The Master of the Sword," my favourite story by Justyn P. Lamb.

KNAVERY IN THE 18th CENTURY

(Overheard in Eastchepe in the year 1703)

1st London Citizen: Good morrow, fair sir, and how goes it with thee?

2nd L. C.: Passing fair; and thou?

1st L. C.: But poorly. I had an attack of the vapours this morning. By the way, dost know one Lionel Abingden?

2nd L. C.: Aye, right well do

I, but nothing to his credit. He is a sorry knave.

1st L. C.: Then, perchance, thou knowest also his friend, one David Latimer?

2nd L. C.: Thou speakest truly. He is even a sorrier knave than Abingden.

1st L. C.: Sayest thou so! Then thou must know one Master Buckland, a dealer in precious stones in Lombard Street?

2nd L. C.: Aye! He is the sorriest knave of the three.

1st L. C.: Beshrew me! Then he must be the Knave of Diamonds!

SEVERAL STORIES about witches appeared in Brett's journals, notably "The Witch of the Abbey," in *Boys of England* Christmas Number, 1895, "The Secret of the Water Witch," *Boys of England*, Vol. 30, 1881, "Legends of Witches and Wizards," *Boys of England*, Vol. 29, "The Witch of Fleet Street," *Boys of England*, No. 413.

While on a holiday at Blackpool I saw the skeleton of "Ug" Bateman, described as the last of the Yorkshire witches. She was hanged at York Castle in 1809. She has been called the Lucretia Borgia of the 17th Century, but if she was she must have been a good old age if she was hanged as late as 1809.

—HENRY STEELE.

FROM THE QUARTER DECK*

KEEN STUDENTS of the methods of Sexton Blake will have deduced from the address given in the S. P. C. Who's Who in the last issue that entry No. 3 had not been written recently. Such was the case. Maurice Bond no longer lives at 172 Caerphilly Road, but at 10 Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

THE EDITOR of an amateur magazine who sets his own type is apt to edit (as well as write) "in the stick"—that is, make minor changes in his contributors' "copy" as he sets the type, and major changes in his own. We are guilty of doing this. Sometimes it makes for clearer reading, but sometimes it doesn't help much. An instance of not helping much is found in this issue, on page 60. There you will read, "The second of these three stories, 'School and Sport', as has been stated . . ." But a careful scrutiny of the article to that point reveals that it hasn't been stated. It *had* been stated in the "copy," but in setting, that which had been stated was omitted for the sake of, it was thought, clearer expression. It proved not to be.

IT IS HIGH TIME we had something to say in these pages

about *The Collectors' Digest*, that grand magazine edited by Herbert Leckenby and Maurice Bond. It to be doubted whether either of the co-editors thought, when No. 1 was "put to bed" in September or October of 1946, that they would have published ten issues, all filled with good things, plus an "extra," by the time a year had passed, and have in view a seemingly inexhaustible supply of material to draw upon for future issues. Incidentally, C. D. has helped to bring a law-breaker to justice. Good work, Herb and Maurice!

WHILE on the subject of our esteemed contemporaries, a word for *The Collector's Miscellany* is in order. As was long the case before the War, Joe Parks is making a feature in the new (5th) series of reproductions of story-paper and "blood" front covers from the days of long ago. These are of great interest to collectors.

Joe has, too, kept the contents of his magazine nicely varied. Especial credit is due him because of the fact that he takes time out from professional printing, which is his livelihood, to produce what is essentially an amateur magazine that is un-

*Is what the Editor of "The Union Jack Library" called his "Chat" page in 1898.

likely ever to earn him a profit—all for the love of it. That is where Joe Parks differs from Herb and Maurice—and from ourself. Theirs, and ours, is also a labor of love, but no one of us needs to neglect that which brings us our living in order to produce our magazine. We move that a resolution be passed expressing our appreciation.

Just in case any of our readers are not acquainted with either of the story paper collectors' magazines mentioned above, here are the addresses of the publishers:

The Collectors' Digest: Herbert Leckenby, Telephone Exchange, c/o S.P.S.O. Cavalry Barracks, York, England.

The Collector's Miscellany: Joseph Parks, 2 Irvin Avenue, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Yorkshire, England.

The address of Maurice Bond, C. D. co-editor, was given on the previous page.

OUR COVER illustration of St. Jim's, like those of Greyfriars and Rookwood in previous issues, is by Robert H. Whiter, a

talented young artist of London, England. He got the inspiration for it, as he did for the others, from the 1923 *Greyfriars Holiday Annual*. We hope to be able to present more of Bob's work in future issues.

THERE IS TO BE noticed a variety of spelling in the pages of this magazine. Sometimes we spell a word like "favour," for instance, with the "u" and sometimes without it. We are in the somewhat peculiar position of publishing in Canada, where the American usage is followed to some extent, a magazine written and circulated mainly in Great Britain. It has been our practice to follow the spelling of the writers of the various articles, but in our own writings we have followed the American custom and spelled it "favor." However, there have doubtless been times when we have left the "u" out of words in contributions that originated in Great Britain, just because the American practice comes naturally to us after sojourning in Canada for so long. — W. H. G.

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