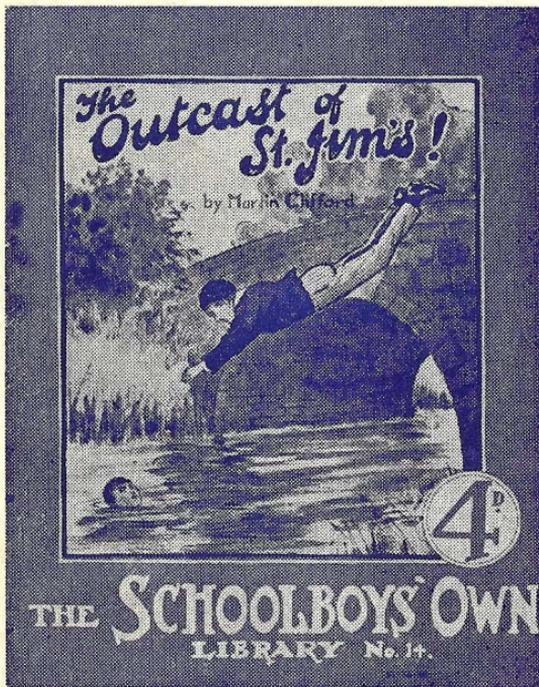


THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JULY, 1952
No. 47 :: Vol. 2



No. 14 of *The Schoolboys' Own Library*, Dated October 31, 1925

Here we present, more especially for the entertainment of Greyfriars enthusiasts, the subject of the "Missing Word" competition which was on the program of last December's meeting of The Old Boys' Book Club, Northern Section. The name of a Greyfriars character is to be placed in each gap in—

A COUNTRY MORNING RAMBLE

IT WAS A fine morning and I was just having a quiet — (1) — round the garden. I had my — (2) — and was collecting all the — (3) —, dead leaves when my neighbour, Smith, called out: "Good morning, Joe! What about a stroll?"

He is a great — (4) —, is Fred, and he soon persuaded me to join him. We soon left the road, and as we crossed a — 5 — Fred pointed out how — 6 — the grass was after the rain.

There was a kind of cave in the thickness of a holly hedge. "Look!" said Smith, "that's where Snobby, that old tramp, — (7) —. I saw him sleeping there one night. It's a wonder it doesn't kill him. They say he has only — (8) —, and what a — (9) — his cough is!"

"He's an ugly beggar," I replied. "Have you seen the — 10 — his nose? It is as red as a — 11 — at times."

Just then we heard someone — (12) — out to us: "Look out! There's a — (13) —!"

We just managed to get over the fence in time. Of course there was a — (14) — on the gate. We thanked Snobby very warmly, for it was he who had warned us.

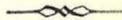
"Good job I was having a — (15) — round," he wheezed. "He certainly made you — 16 —!"

The old tramp was getting his breakfast ready, and we watched him — (17) — a — (18) — over the embers of his wood fire.

"That smells good!" said Fred. "A meal like that should make quite a — (19) — of you, Snobby."

"Ar! This is the life for me!" wheezed Snobby. "I wouldn't change places with an — 20 —. This is better than heaven."

A coin or two changed hands and we went on our way.



THE MISSING WORDS

1, Potter. 2, Rake. 3, Brown. 4, Walker. 5, Field. 6, Greene. 7, Kipps. 8, Wun Lung. 9, Hacker. 10, Wharton. 11, Cherry. 12, Singh. 13, Bull. 14, Locke. 15, Snoop. 16, Hop Hi. 17, Fry. 18, Fish. 19, Nugent. 20, Angel.

(Supplied by Gerald Allison)

The Story Paper Collector

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

No. 47—Vol. 2

JULY, 1952

Priceless

When so much has been written on the subject of "old boys' books" one might feel justified in thinking that the collector-writers would run short of something about which to write; but further reflection leads to the conclusion that they never will! There is always some new "angle." Here we have something that has not previously appeared in these pages: a thoughtful study of—

THE ST. JIM'S STORIES IN THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY

By ROGER M. JENKINS

THERE IS A UNIQUE attraction about *The Schoolboys' Own Library* which is rather difficult to put into words.

Though the stories were mainly reprints, and though a score or more different schools were represented during the fifteen years in which the *Library* was published, nevertheless the monthly appearance on the bookstalls of the two or three neat little volumes with that characteristic blue edge around the illustration on the front cover never failed to evoke a welcoming response from the youthful reader. Perhaps this

was because a catholic assortment was offered; perhaps it was because the books were of a handy size and not so easily destructible as *Magnets* and *Gems*; perhaps it was because of the length of reading matter in each volume. Whatever the reason, *The Schoolboys' Own Library* performed a useful service in making available to new readers the best of the school stories that had appeared in the past, and its reprints of St. Jim's stories were probably the most useful of all.

St. Jim's is a much under-rated school. This is because *The Gem*

was the paper in which the substitute writers had their freest hand, and also because in 1931, when their activities were brought to a standstill, it was decided to reprint the very early stories. Through this smoke-screen it is not easy to obtain a balanced view of the St. Jim's stories as a whole, and it is equally difficult to obtain copies of stories by Charles Hamilton in *Gems* of the Golden Age — the early nineteen-twenties. Fortunately, copies of *The Schoolboys' Own Library* are not so rare, and so it is that through them we can attempt to assess the merit of the best work of the genuine Martin Clifford.

THE YEAR 1917 is a significant one in the history of *The Gem*, for the two long character series of that year contain the seeds of greatness. These series were among the first St. Jim's stories to be published in *The Schoolboys' Own Library*. No. 8 was entitled "His Brother's Burden" and describes the difficulties Harry Manners encountered in attempting to keep his younger brother out of trouble; especially noteworthy is the character sketch of the stern Mr. Manners whose affection was solely for his younger son to the exclusion of the elder. No. 14, "The Outcast of the School," relates how Cardew

became ostracized when it was learned that he had had to leave Wodehouse, his former school, in disgrace. Compared with the Stacey series in the later *Magnets*, for instance, these two St. Jim's series may seem a little slender and lacking in substance, but when viewed in their proper perspective it will at once be realized that they were of tremendous importance in that they were really the fore-runners of all Charles Hamilton's great character series, both those of Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

Stories about St. Jim's appeared somewhat irregularly in *The Schoolboys' Own Library*; there were 81 in all, an average of one every other month. They were not always reprinted with strict regard for chronological order; for example No. 50, "Tom Merry's Enemy," deals with the return of Lumley-Lumley, while No. 55, "A Rank Outsider," describes his arrival as a new boy. Again, No. 383, "The Great Grundy," contains reprints from *Gems* dated as far apart as 1924, 1916, and 1931 respectively. Nevertheless, despite discrepancies like this, when the sources of all the reprinted St. Jim's tales have been examined, it is possible to make out a certain general pattern, which is more than can be said for the Rookwood stories in the *Library*. With

No. 222.—THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY.

THE BOY WHO HATED ST. JIM'S!



By Martin
Clifford

Inside Title Design, Schoolboys' Own Library No. 222

the exception of the two stories mentioned in the previous paragraph, all the St. Jim's reprints from 1925 to 1931 were taken from the very early *Gems* published before the first World War. Most of these stories were reprinted once again in *The Gem* in the 'thirties, and they need not concern us here. From July, 1931, all but one of the reprints were taken from *Gems* of the 'twenties, and these are the tales that so richly reward the discriminating collector.

With such a rich field for exploration, it is difficult to pick out particular stories for special attention. One thing is certain, however, and that is that No. 214, "The Toff's Sacrifice," can not be excluded from this review. Talbot was always one of the most popular characters at St. Jim's, and this tale relates how he had to leave the school rather than expose his cousin, Crooke, as the thief who stole £50 from Mr. Railton's study. This was one of the last series

about Talbot to appear in *The Gem*, and it was also one of the finest of all those that concerned the Toff.

UNLIKE THE LATER Greyfriars stories, the St. Jim's tales seldom had a secondary plot. This did not, however, prevent Charles Hamilton from writing some very fine dramatic series for *The Gem*, one of the best of which was reprinted in *The Schoolboys' Own Library* No. 218 under the title of "Cousin Ethel's Chum." Gussy's "tenner" had disappeared from his study, and it had mysteriously found its way into his cousin Ethel's possession. Figgins did his best to shield her, and suspicion fell on Cardew, though Baggy Trimble was the real culprit. It made a pleasant change to have a series centring around Figgins, especially so good a series as this. One cannot but admire the unerring craftsmanship displayed in the construction of these excellent tales.

Barrings-out always had an irresistible appeal, and there were many, both in *The Magnet* and *The Gem*. Nevertheless, just as there was only one first-rate rebellion at Greyfriars—the episode of Mr. Brander and his nephew Van Tromp—so was there only one such series at St. Jim's, when Tom Merry was accused of theft and expelled.

This series appeared in *The Schoolboys' Own Library* in Nos. 234 and 236, "A Christmas Barrings-Out" and "The Rebels of St. Jim's." They made grand reading, though the explanation of the theft at the end could have been more carefully interwoven into the plot.

The humorous type of story was not neglected in these reprints. In No. 264, "Baggy Trimble's Reform," Baggy proved to his would-be reformers that goodness could be more objectionable than his particular form of badness. No. 302, "Raising the Wind," describes the efforts made by the juniors to raise a little cash; they went into the catering business, only to have all their profits eaten up by Fatty Wynn and a hungry cyclist; they worked for Mr. Pepper, only to be refused payment when Gussy let all his chicken escape; Monty Lowther even disguised himself as a black-face minstrel, while Gussy tried to pawn his gold watch. Martin Clifford certainly excelled himself in these amusing tales.

It is remarkable how often the St. Jim's stories revolved around the occupants of study No. 9, especially Levison and Cardew. One of the greatest *Gem* series was reprinted in No. 196, "A Schoolboy's Sacrifice," in

which Ernest Levison untruthfully confessed to stealing Mr. Selby's French banknote to save his younger brother Frank from expulsion. The delineation of character in this series was exceptionally fine, especially as displayed in the exchanges between Mr. Selby and Dr. Holmes on the reason why Mr. Selby had such a large sum in foreign currency (a delicate matter of gambling on exchange rates). Almost as good as this series was the one reprinted in No. 338, "The Price of Loyalty," in which Levison performed a not dissimilar service for Cardew.

But it was the volatile and whimsical Cardew who dominated so many of the best stories, like No. 168, "The Cardew Cup," and No. 374, "The Boy They Couldn't Trust." He never achieved greater eminence, however, than the time when he aspired to become junior captain of the school in Nos. 258 and 260, "Captain and Slacker" and "The Stick-at-Nothing School-boy." In his own inimitable manner, he found that when he had achieved his object he had no further interest in it.

STORIES ABOUT summer holidays spent in the English countryside have an especial attraction, and Martin Clifford fairly excelled himself in *The Gem* in the years 1921, 1923, and

1924. The first series was reprinted in *The Schoolboys' Own Library* No. 152, "Seven Schoolboys and Solomon," and the last series re-appeared in No. 250, "The St. Jim's Hikers." Both were very entertaining tales, but pride of place must undoubtedly be allotted to the middle series, dealing with that delightful trip down the Thames in the Old Bus. These stories were reprinted in two of the monthly volumes, Nos. 228 and 230, "Seven Boys in a Boat" and "The River Adventurers." There was no connecting link throughout all these stories as there was in the later Greyfriars holiday series like the secret of the *Holiday Annual* or the mystery of the Water Lily.

But what these stories lacked in plot construction they amply made up for in richness of isolated incident and in skill in characterization. Much as one admires the closely-knit Greyfriars stories of the 'thirties, it is not possible to wish that these charming summer idylls of Tom Merry & Co. were anything but what they were. The lazy heat of the afternoon on a country road, the splash of an oar on the warm water, or the creaking of a caravan rolling past the fruitful countryside—all these impressions spring to life from the pages of these

stories. Why send the St. Jim's juniors abroad for their holidays when there was such grand fun to be had in England?

As a general rule, the average series in *The Gem* tended to be somewhat shorter than one in *The Magnet*, and consequently this facilitated the reprinting of the St. Jim's stories since it meant that there were far more series available to fit a single number of *The Schoolboys' Own Library*. The story of Mr. Railton's nephew, Victor Cleeve, in No. 222, "The Boy Who Hated St. Jim's," is an excellent example of this, as is also No. 344, "The Saving of Selby," which relates how Cardew delivered the Third Form master from the clutches of a blackmailer. Similarly, No. 332, "The Mystery of Holly Lodge," which deals with Monty Lowther's uncle, is another short series which makes fine dramatic reading.

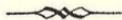
THERE WERE one or two outstandingly good St. Jim's series that were never reprinted, like *Gem* Nos. 742 to 747 about Roger Rackstraw, the kidnapper, and *Gem* Nos. 752 to 758 which recount how Gussy ran away from St. Jim's and took refuge in Greyfriars, Highcliffe, Cliff House, and Rookwood. Conversely, a number of stories by substitute writers were reprinted, most of which ought

never to have found their way into print once, let alone twice. Collectors should note that Nos. 180, 186, 200, 208, 224, 240, 274, 276, 350, 395, and 401 of *The Schoolboys' Own Library* were not written by Charles Hamilton.

Nevertheless, the later St. Jim's reprints were, on the whole, a representative selection of the best *Gem* stories; to the younger readers of *The Gem* who did not commence taking that paper until after the reprinting began in 1931, these monthly stories in *The Schoolboys' Own Library* came as a revelation of a Golden Age never, alas, to return to the pages of *The Gem* in all its former glory. There can be no doubt that, until 1926, *The Gem* was a far superior paper to *The Magnet*, and one could confidently have predicted then that had Charles Hamilton continued to devote as much time to St. Jim's as he did to Greyfriars *The Magnet* would never have surpassed *The Gem* at all. But there is no need to cry over spilt milk; and the collector who surveys his *Schoolboys' Own Libraries* by the genuine Martin Clifford stacked neatly on the bookshelf can content himself with the reflection that in them he possesses the cream of the St. Jim's stories. Much as one esteems the tales of Greyfriars, it is impossible not to concede

great admiration and affection for these sensitive and thoughtful stories of St. Jim's, whether they be humorous or dramatic. Indeed, it was not for nothing that St. Jim's was created before

Greyfriars, and it is these monthly volumes that bear witness to the fact that Frank Richards still had a lot to learn from Martin Clifford.



Origins of the St. Jim's Stories Recommended in the Foregoing Article

Number and Title of <i>The Schoolboys' Own Library</i>	Gem Origins
8—"His Brother's Burden"	494, 495, 496
14—"The Outcast of St. Jim's"	486, 488, 489
152—"Seven Schoolboys and Solomon"	698, 699, 700, 701
168—"The Cardew Cup"	768, 769, 770, 771, 772
196—"A Schoolboy's Sacrifice"	906, 907, 908, 909
214—"The Toff's Sacrifice"	988, 989, 990, 991
218—"Cousin Ethel's Chum"	951, 952, 953, 954
222—"The Boy Who Hated St. Jim's"	1070, 1071, 1072
228—"Seven Boys in a Boat"	812, 813, 814, 815
230—"The River Adventurers"	816, 817, 818, 808
234—"A Christmas Barring-Out"	776, 777, 778, 779
236—"The Rebels of St. Jim's"	780, 782, 783, 784
250—"The St. Jim's Hikers"	864, 865, 866, 867
258—"Captain and Slacker"	824, 825, 826, 827
260—"The Stick-at-Nothing Schoolboy"	828, 829, 830, 831
264—"Baggy Trimble's Reform"	1000, 927, 928
302—"Raising the Wind"	748, 749, 750, 751
332—"The Mystery of Holly Lodge"	895, 897, 898, 899
338—"The Price of Loyalty"	1006, 1007, 1162
344—"The Saving of Selby"	797, 923, 924
374—"The Boy They Couldn't Trust"	852, 853, 855, 856

Greyfriars on TV

TELEVISION has at last brought to life Billy Bunter, but—and there must be a “but”—how well? Six half-hour programmes were produced by Joy Harrington from scripts written by Frank Richards. How well the author, producer, stage-effects men, and the cast succeeded in creating the right atmosphere depends on the individual viewer, but the point of interest rests with the cast.

Dealing with some of the characters we met, Billy Bunter without doubt should come first. Gerald Campion took this part and although a married man he fitted comfortably into it. The “fat squeak” that often echoed along the Remove passage at Greyfriars floated convincingly from the TV screen, while Campion’s amusing fibs and evasions when questioned by Mr. Quelch were most “lifelike.”

Mr. Quelch.—This difficult part was taken by an ex-schoolmaster, Knylston Reeves, who performed his task faithfully and correctly. Owing to a slip somewhere, Mr. Quelch’s glasses had ear-pieces, which as any discerning Magnet reader knows is incorrect. The dryness of speech one expects from Quelch was there, though for looks—I have seen once or twice Mr. Quelch’s twin out for a stroll!

Harry Wharton.—A near-perfect Captain of the Remove was John Charlesworth, although he did not have to mount the “high horse” or struggle with his pride.

The “Co.”—For the most part they were good. Bob Cherry could have been more boisterous; his famous “Hallo, hallo, hallo!” was rather weak. Johnny Bull could have been more dogmatic, less tactful. A word of praise for “Inky,” who must have found his “lingo” rather a mouthful.

Wingate.—In episode 5, “Billy Bunter’s Bicycle,” Wingate was far too friendly with the Removites, even though he was supposed to be producing a play. He even took “cheek” from Bunter without giving him “six.”

Vernon-Smith.—Not nearly “cheeky” enough to be “the Bounder.”

Skinner, Mauleverer, Coker, and Gosling all looked in and on the whole were satisfactory. The briefest “looker-in” was Loder, who attempted to enter the Remove stronghold in the first story, “The Siege,” and was set upon and hurled off screen amid cries of “Victory!”

Paul Prout has been left until last; among all the actors he seemed most at home. During a scene in “Billy Bunter’s Postal-Order” Coker struggled with Mr. Quelch on the floor in the dark,

[Turn to page 292, please]

THREE NEW STORIES COMMENCED IN OUR LAST ISSUE.



No. 2—Vol. III.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 1883

[ONE PENNY.]



HARDY WAVED THE LANTERN, BUT STILL THE TRAIN CAME RUSHING ON.

“Look! No Wheels!” *The Boy's World*, Number 2 of
Volume 3, March 12th, 1881

[Facing page 290



THE BOY'S WORLD

THE ONLY SOURCE of information regarding *The Boy's World* that I have, apart from copies of two issues and some pages from two others, is the list given in "100 Years of Boys' Weeklies" in the 1947 *Collectors' Digest Annual*. There one learns that the paper was published by "Ralph Rollington" and that No. 1 was dated April 4th, 1879; that it ran to 404 issues, the last being dated December 27th, 1886. My copies are No. 63, Vol. II, June 19th, 1880, No. 2, Vol. III, March 12th, 1881, and portions of Nos. 1 (I judge it to be) and 6, Vol. III, March 5th and April 9th, 1881. The evidence points to the serial-numbering having been continued through Vols. I and II, but that it began at No. 1 again for Vol. III. In No. 63 is an instalment of a serial, "Dick Cheveley; His Adventures and Misadventures," by W. H. G. Kingston, famous in those days as a writer for boys. The "no wheels" effect in the picture on the front page of No. 2, Vol. III, reproduced overleaf, is even more striking in the original size. Perhaps the artist was puzzled how to depict the wheels of a speeding train, so hid them in clouds of steam. — W.H.G.



THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Published by Wm. H. Gander, Transcona, Manitoba, Canada

In our last issue we had, for the first time, an article about The Boys' Realm. Here another boys' weekly of years gone by is at last given some attention——

THE DETECTIVE LIBRARY

By LEONARD M. ALLEN

IN THE YEARS immediately following the first World War the Amalgamated Press concentrated on capturing the market for boys' papers, and they offered no fewer than eight new titles in 1919. These, however, proved to be too much of a good thing and nearly all, within a year, were merged with old established favourites. *The Detective Library* was one that fell by the wayside after a short run, though it could well have rivalled *The Union Jack* had other attractions for the school-boys' limited pocket money been less numerous.

The first two numbers appeared on June 14th, 1919, the size being slightly larger than the first series *Nelson Lee Library*. There were 32 pages and the price was 1½d. The outside cover pages, front and back, carried coloured illustrations of the stories, and there was another on the centre pages. The artist throughout the run of the paper was Arthur Jones with his somewhat crude but

effective style. Stories of Nelson Lee and Gordon Fox started the ball rolling, the first being reprints of short stories by Maxwell Scott while Gordon Fox was a Murray Graydon character who first made his bow in *The Boys' Herald*. The next two issues of the paper appeared on July 15th with another Lee yarn but detective Fawcett Milford replaced Fox.

It was evident that *The Detective Library* caught on for commencing September 13th it appeared weekly, but instead of three coloured illustrations one was in black and white and readers were invited to colour it, the sender of the best effort being awarded an original Jones illustration. The changes were rung on the two detectives each week, an original adventure of Sexton Blake appearing in No. 10, until December 6th, when there were three detective stories. These featured Blake, Lee, and Derek Clyde, the latter at the same time entertaining readers of *Thomson's Weekly News*

and *The Glasgow Weekly Record*. As usual with the Amalgamated Press at this period authors were anonymous, but a terrific boost was suddenly given to popular Sidney Drew with the first story of Graydon Garth in No. 13, followed by his Nelson Lee yarn, "The Pool of Peril," in No. 25.

A MORE SETTLED policy was introduced by the editor with No. 29. Blake and Lee were firmly established, the latter having a weekly duel with another favourite, Jim the Penman. The old publicity stunt of changing the locale of the yarns to various large towns was tried. Possibly on account of the success of the Edwy Searles Brooks St. Frank's stories, Sexton Blake was appointed master of the Fifth at Kingsmere College to protect the life of a member of that form. Tinker, to his disgust, became the headmaster's secretary or amanuensis, and a poor one at that.

The Kingsmere stories formed a series and gradually became school yarns pure and simple. A further effort to change the tone

of the paper was the republication of Maxwell Scott's old *Boys' Herald* serial, "Nipper at St. Ninian's," in No. 35. Nelson Lee, however, having successfully dealt with the Penman, entered into a series versus the Brotherhood of Five Fingers.

All these efforts to increase circulation must have proved fruitless; even Sexton Blake with a barring-out on his hands did not attract the modest three-halfpence and in No. 48 the editor plaintively asked his remaining readers what they did want. Evidently they did not want *The Detective Library* or its companion papers, *The Prairie Library* and *The Robin Hood Library*, for two weeks later all were merged to form *The Nugget Weekly* on July 17th, 1920. This "three for the price of one" paper was even shorter-lived, only 34 issues being published. The ghost of *The Detective Library* persisted in *The Nelson Lee Library* in the shape of "Our Detective Story Section" until December 9th, 1922.

GREYFRIARS ON TV [From page 290]

thinking he has caught the missing Bunter. Out came Mr. Prout to inquire: "What Mr. Quelch might be doing, playing on the floor with a Fifth form boy?"!!

Like the "Bunter Books," Billy

Bunter was featured in all the stories, taking the lion's share. Good policy or bad?

Personally, I'm all for Bunter on T.V.

—MAURICE HALL

In the August, 1951, Collectors' Digest Eric Fayne writes: "It's a good thing that we do not all like and think the same way. What a dull world it would be if we did!" This is our thought when we print articles in S.P.C. and we hope it is yours as you read—

MAGNET-IC ATTRACTION

By GEORGE MELL

IN HIS VERY interesting article, "Reflections on *The Gem*," (S.P.C. No. 44) Roger Jenkins hits on the head a nail I have been seeking in a vague sort of way ever since my schooldays.

Ever an avid reader of *The Magnet*, I could never tolerate more than an occasional *Gem* and even the St. Jim's yarns in *The Holiday Annual* seemed vastly inferior to those about Greyfriars, although I could never see why. Naturally, I was deceived by the seeming fact that two men wrote the stories, and, especially in *The Holiday Annual* when Martin Clifford or Frank Richards descended on the schools they had created, that, to my young mind, proved the separate existence of two authors.

Roger Jenkins' theory that a multiplicity of rival camps within St. Jim's tended to become tiresome explains my own indifference to *The Gem*, but I am still puzzled why, after a

lapse of twenty-odd years, Greyfriars and its characters can still interest me.

For, as stories in which one can really believe, they will not bear examination. The more true-to-life stories of Hylton Cleaver, Gunby Hadath, and Richard Bird, which appeared in *Chums*, *The Boy's Own Paper*, and *The Captain*, are superior in every respect, characters and events are much more credible, and formed the next step in the approach to adult reading-matter when one outgrew *The Magnet* and *The Gem*.

But Greyfriars has some spark, some touch that makes the Frank Richards stories still appeal when critical faculties tell me I should not waste my time over them. Where is the magic? What makes me pester friends for old copies of Frank Richards' stories and read with unbounded enjoyment magazines devoted to old boys' books?

My own theory is that such features as *The Greyfriars*

Gallery, drawings showing the arrangements of rooms and studies at Greyfriars, lists of their occupants and interviews with them, made me in my youth believe that the school really existed. Now I await the lucky day when I can acquire one of the earlier *Holiday Annuals* so that I can examine those features and re-assess them.

ONE THING I do know, however — why I abandoned *The Magnet*. There seems to have been a sort of “cycle” of plots, for I distinctly remember reading two separate series in which a film company visited Greyfriars and Wingate fell in love with the leading lady. Harold Skinner’s reformation was recorded at least twice, as was Harry Wharton’s lapse from perpetual virtue. Ultimately I felt a sort of “this is where I came in” atmosphere creeping over me and I changed to Nelson Lee, but only when his adventures centred around St. Frank’s.

The Lee detective stories, like those of Sexton Blake, repelled me. So did adult “whodunits” until they developed to their present stage in which the author plays fair with his readers, gives all the clues and yet baffles us until, in the last chapter, a perfectly plausible explanation

accounts for every bizarre stage in the proceedings.

I fell for the sheer magic of Sherlock Holmes and his adventures have never ceased to captivate me. How many collectors of Frank Richards’ stories realize that they share with the Sherlockians the distinction of having adopted the only fictional characters on record who are treated as if they really lived?

Enthusiasts have combed Conan Doyle’s stories and built up several versions of Sherlock Holmes’ and Dr. Watson’s biographies and have evolved extremely complicated ideas for reconciling contradictions that were bound to arise when stories dated in the same year might have been written years apart.

My own modest library of Sherlockiana contains but five books and has already been outstripped by my collection of *The Story Paper Collector*, *The Collectors’ Digest*, and *The Collector’s Miscellany*.

Charles Hamilton in his various guises must have something the others do not have. But why did he not use it in making Rookwood a second Greyfriars instead of a third-rate St. Jim’s? Can anyone account for the moderate amount of interest that Jimmy Silver & Co. aroused in me and many others?