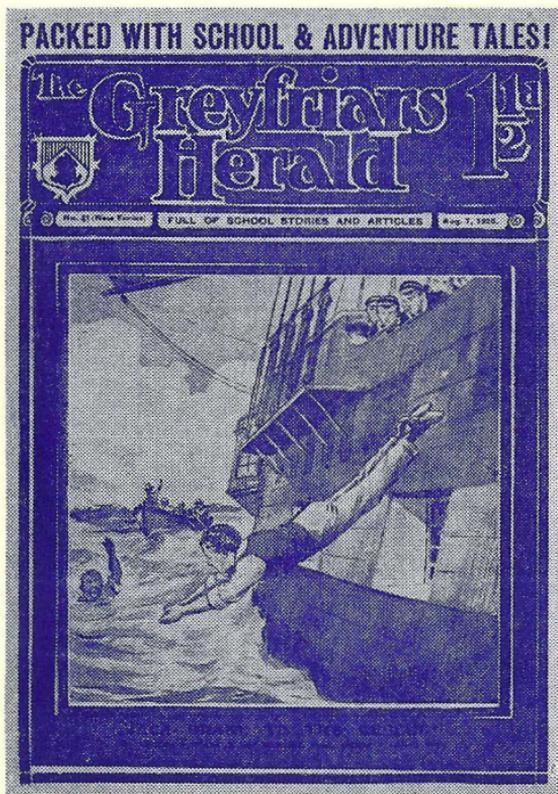


THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JULY 1957
No. 63 :: Vol. 3



Jack Drake Dives to Rescue Tin Tacks—"What a Name!"
Murmured Rodney—The Greyfriars Herald No. 41, Aug. 7, 1920

Other Instances of Repeated Pictures

THE ITEM, *Another Picture That Was Repeated*, on page 136 of *The Story Paper Collector* Number 59, reminded me of some instances of repeated drawings. Not those redrawn by fresh artists, but the original drawings used to illustrate reprints. When *The Penny Popular* began the abridged reprints of St. Jim's and Greyfriars stories the reprinted illustrations were, in the main, those that had previously appeared in *The Gem* and *The Magnet*. "Red" Magnets being scarce, one is thankful to *The Penny Pop* for those reprints of the work of Arthur Clarke.

There are, however, instances of illustrations which did not grace the original story, and were used to plough a fresh field. For example: the arrival at Greyfriars of Vernon-Smith in *The Penny Popular* Number 6 (new series) has a drawing entitled "The Bounder Declines to Get Up!" It is well-drawn and surely by Arthur Clarke, but it did not appear with the original story in *Magnet* Number 119. From what source did this drawing come?

The Rookwood abridged reprints began in *The Penny Popular* in Number 237 (old series),

April 21st, 1917, and the illustrations were, I vow, again by Arthur Clarke. Yet he had died before the Rookwood stories began in *The Boys' Friend* in 1915. Perhaps an attempt to discover the source of these illustrations would be neither possible nor profitable.

The editors of the old "blood and thunder" periodicals used the old, crude illustrations over and over, the writers having to write scenes or stories around them. Where this was not done, the picture often had little connection with the action of the story. Period costume was often the big snag.

Having too little leisure for such "research," it was quite a feat on my part to have traced even one example. In *The Magnet* Number 399, October 2nd, 1915, Coker is depicted sprawled across his study table after having received a lesson on good manners from the chums of the Remove. This drawing was repeated, almost intact, in *The Penny Popular* Number 8 (new series), March 15th, 1919, and was entitled "The Removites Take the Bounder in Hand." Almost intact, for now the rugged features of Coker are substituted by those of Vernon-Smith, and on the extreme right Potter (or Greene) has had his senior's jacket shortened to Etons.

—MAURICE KUTNER

The Story Paper Collector

No. 63 - Vol. 3

Priceless

JACK DRAKE'S SCHOOLDAYS

By ROGER M. JENKINS

A Talk Delivered to the Northern Club in March, 1957

TO THE CASUAL READER of *The Magnet* Jack Drake would have been known (if at all) as the assistant of the famous Ferrers Locke, and a former member of the Greyfriars Remove. Whilst it is true that Drake never became as famous as many other Hamiltonian characters, he nevertheless made regular appearances in *The Magnet*, but Frank Richards never seemed to mention that Drake had in fact spent his schooldays at St. Winifred's originally, and few readers in later years could have known that the tales of St. Winifred's had been written by Owen Conquest and formed the main item of interest in the second series of *The Greyfriars Herald*.

The first series of *The Greyfriars Herald* had had a short life for a few weeks in 1915-16, and had then collapsed, mainly as a result of the paper shortage. The second series commenced on November 1st, 1919, and was slightly different from the first both in size and in contents. Charles Hamilton continued to contribute more of the Herlock Sholmes stories, though not so regularly. The *piece de resistance* was, as stated, the stories of St. Winifred's. And they were unquestionably original in their setting.

St. Winifred's was an ancient foundation, and its buildings were apparently as old as its ancestry, for the first number revealed that the foundations

had become dangerous. (Some months later it was given out that a German bomb had assisted in the process of disintegration.) Dr. Goring, the headmaster, had accordingly transferred the school temporarily to the Benbow, a warship of the Napoleonic era which was anchored in the river Chadway, a tributary of the Thames.

JACK DRAKE as a hero was as unexpected as the background to the stories. In the very first number he celebrated the last day of the holidays by going off on a spree with the Bucks of St. Winifred's, Daubeny, Egan, and Torrance, and they were joined by Daubeny's illustrious cousin, Ponsonby of Highcliffe. When Drake returned he was informed that his father had been ruined by the war, and his immediate reaction was one of self-pity and petulance at the thought that he would have to try for the Foundation scholarship. In a few paragraphs Charles Hamilton had succeeded in creating an entirely novel hero. Harry Wharton had faults of pride and touchiness, and Tom Merry was perhaps too easy-going, but Drake was shewn from the beginning as a weak-willed though good-natured lad — a very unusual central character indeed.

It was Dick Rodney who really deserved to be the hero of the series. He was the son of a naval officer who had fallen at the battle of Jutland, and had accordingly been admitted at half-fees. Rodney had the steadiness, the determination, and the keenness to see through Daubeny that was entirely lacking in Drake. Rodney and Drake met on the train and struck up a friendship that compelled Rodney to exercise great forbearance, as the following extract will shew:

He jumped from the carriage and Rodney followed him out. There was a surge in the well-dressed crowd, and three elegant fellows came to join Drake — Daubeny & Co. of the Shell.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Daubeny. "Lookin' for you, Drake."

"Here we are again!" grinned Torrance.

"The car's waitin', old boy," remarked Egan.

"The car!" repeated Drake.

Daubeny of the Shell nodded and smiled.

"Yaas, we're not goin' by the local train. Too jolly slow! We had to wait for you, old top, so I improved the shinin' hour by telephonin' for a car. Thoughtful of me, what? Come on!"

"But——" began Drake.

"Oh, come on!"

"I've got a friend here," said Drake, "a new chap—Rodney——"

The "Bucks" of St. Winifred's glanced carelessly at Dick Rodney. Daubeny jammed his eyeglass a little more tightly in his eye, as if to take a better survey of him. Rodney coloured a little. He was aware that these well-dressed, wealthy fellows "sized him up" at a single glance, and were surprised—and not pleased—to find that Drake had made friends with him. There certainly was no room for a poor scholar in Daub's expensive set at St. Winifred's.

"Awfully sorry, there's only room for four in the car, an' we're four," drawled Daubeny. "I'm sure your—ahem—friend will excuse us, Drake. This way, dear boy."

"But——"

"We can talk in the car, you know—dashed crowd here. Let's get out of this."

Vernon Daubeny took Drake's arm, and Egan took his other arm. Rodney did not speak or stir.

Drake gave him an irresolute glance.

"You'll excuse me, Rodney?" he stammered.

"Certainly!"

The next moment Rodney was lost in the crowd. Jack Drake was marched out of the station by his affectionate chums.

His cheeks were burning.

He was aware that he had treated Rodney shabbily; and after that

friendly talk in the train the new fellow had probably expected Drake to stand by him, and help him through his first day at a strange school. It had been Drake's intention to do so, and to make arrangements for Rodney to "dig" with him on the Benbow.

And here he was, walking out of the station with his laughing comrades, and Dick Rodney already lost to sight. Drake hesitated, but his comrades did not even notice his hesitation; they walked him on. And all the time Drake knew, rather than suspected, that his greeting would have been very different if Daub and Co. had only known the facts. They would have left him to Rodney's society willingly enough then.

THE FIRST TERM ran from Number 1 to Number 26 of *The Greyfriars Herald*—exactly six months. The Amalgamated Press were not so careful about the timing of their stories in those days, and it is probable that the intended date of commencement had been brought forward from January to November, thus unnaturally prolonging the Spring Term. There was, however, no sense of padding about the series, since the stories (which were incidentally usually illustrated by R. J. Macdonald) ran to only three or four chapters a week. All but one of the first 26 stories

revolved round Drake and Daubeny. It would be tedious to relate the plots of these stories, but it may be of interest, for the light it throws on Drake's character, to state that he continued his association with Daubeny & Co., and that he recommenced breaking bounds and gambling, his associates attributing his lack of money to parental displeasure, not reduced circumstances, a misapprehension which Drake was too proud to correct. The truth eventually came to light, and the break with Daubeny was more or less complete, although Daubeny assumed friendship once or twice to serve his turn. Eventually, after many mishaps, Drake won his scholarship and was then overjoyed to learn that the fallen fortunes of his father had been regained. The one real break in the series occurred in Number 14, which described how the fat boy, Rupert de Vere Toodles, usually known as Tuckey, was confidently expecting a £50 tip. The tip in fact turned out to be only a pound (a Bradley note, not a sovereign) which was blown overboard into the river. Tuckey Toodles, who shared a study with Drake and Rodney, was more perspicacious than the usual fat boy, though he possessed a number of attributes which bore the unmistakable

9 lines up: for Bradley read Bradbury!!

stamp of his famous predecessor, Billy Bunter.

There were many touches which reminded readers of the differences between St. Winifred's and the usual type of school. There was a canteen, for example, not a tuckshop, and the boys slept in hammocks. Breaking bounds was more difficult in that it necessitated sliding down a rope over the side of the ship into a rowing boat specially ordered in advance. The way was then all clear for an evening's entertainment at the Lobster Pot.

THE 1920 Easter holiday was described in one week's issue, sandwiched between the end of the long Spring Term and the beginning of the Summer Term. But before we continue with the *Greyfriars Herald's* we must pick up the thread of the Drake saga which appeared in the 1921 *Holiday Annual*, which of course was published in September, 1920. The St. Jim's story entitled *All Gussy's Fault* was specially written for the *Annual* and described how the juniors cycled over to the Benbow—only fifteen miles away, surprisingly enough—to have tea with Drake and Rodney. Daubeny had arranged a cricket match with St. Jim's, but when Tom Merry saw how badly the

official St. Winifred's side played, he agreed that Wally D'Arcy & Co. should have the fixture, an arrangement which was bitterly regretted when Drake and his friends spirited away Daubeny & Co. and appeared at St. Jim's to play the match in their stead. It seems, from the context of the Benbow series, that this *Holiday Annual* story fitted in somewhere at the beginning of the Summer Term.

BACK NOW to *The Greyfriars Herald*, where the Summer Term began with the election of a junior captain. Drake and Daubeny tied the first week, necessitating a second election at a later date, but once again the unexpected happened: Daubeny eventually won by four votes, and Drake's campaign to stop the rot at St. Winifred's seemed to have been a failure.

Charles Hamilton must have realized that the novelty of the Benbow was now wearing a little thin, and that a new impetus was required. At any rate, after a few weeks of conventional stories, it became known that the school buildings of St. Winifred's were now partly repaired, but that a number of boys who could still not be accommodated at the school (which of course included all the interesting characters) would be allowed to sail

aboard the Benbow on an Atlantic trip—no mean feat for a ship of such antiquity!

The trip necessitated a number of changes. Hammocks were now slung in studies in order to make room for the crew, and lessons were given on deck in fine weather. A more significant change, however, was the one which was to take place in the relationship between Drake and Daubeny. As the result of a quarrel between them Drake was inadvertently knocked overboard. Daubeny was full of remorse, and when Drake was picked up later and did not explain how the accident occurred, a firm friendship was struck between them. It was a curious friendship in that Drake's friends still distrusted Daubeny, whilst Daubeny's friends still disliked Drake, but it nevertheless led to Daubeny's resigning the junior captaincy and endorsing Drake's candidacy. So the old campaign came to a successful conclusion in a surprising way.

In the meanwhile, the Benbow was visiting Barbadoes and Trinidad, and finished up at Venezuela, where the juniors made a long excursion up the Orinoco in search of buried treasure. With bitter irony, it was discovered when they reached the hiding-place that Daubeny's father had found the treasure years before,

and their exertions were fruitless. The Benbow eventually sailed back to England, and reached home just before Christmas.

IT MIGHT BE appropriate at this stage to pass a few comments on *The Greyfriars Herald*. The war-time edition had had a very amateur look about it, and might well have been run by the boys themselves. On the other hand the post-war series, in which the Benbow stories appeared, displayed an extremely professional air, even sporting a coloured cover from the very beginning, some years ahead of *The Magnet* and *The Gem*. As time went on it became obvious that the link with Greyfriars was becoming more and more tenuous, and with Number 45 the word *Greyfriars* in the title was printed obscurely, the title seeming to be just *The Herald*. In Number 61 the title was *The Greyfriars Boys' Herald*, and in the following week only the last two words were printed in bold type, so that to all intents and purposes the *Boys' Herald* was now just another weekly magazine, no longer owing any allegiance to the group of companion papers. The fiction that it was edited by Harry Wharton was given up with Number 58, Number 59 having the message to readers signed by *Your Editor*. It was not

long before all the gossipy articles about Greyfriars ceased altogether. Finally in this connexion it may be added that for some years a dispute has been carried on concerning the length of the run of the second series of *The Greyfriars Herald*. My collection ends at Number 70, but it appears that the last number was in fact Number 126, dated March 25th, 1922. The very fact that the end of this paper (like that of *School and Sport*) was shrouded in mystery is, however, a good indication that its circulation was dropping badly and that ceasing to represent the *Herald* as the work of the Greyfriars juniors did nothing to postpone its demise.

Strangely enough, as the *Herald* began to sever its connexion with Greyfriars in one way, the association was strengthened in another. When the Benbow returned to England, it appeared that St. Winifred's could still not accommodate all the wanderers, and so Drake and Rodney were transferred to Greyfriars. They spent Christmas at Wharton Lodge, and the first number of 1921 saw them at Greyfriars, with Jack Drake bagging the Fifth Form brake and driving it to school himself in a manner very reminiscent of Jimmy Silver's first day at Rookwood. And

so began the next phase of the Jack Drake saga in the *Herald*.

DRAKE RAN the usual gamut of new boys' difficulties, including trouble with the form bully and a dispute over the study. He also had a taste of Wharton at his worst when he tried to bag Study No. 1:

"Time's up!" said Harry Wharton crisply. "Are you fellows going?"

Drake glanced at Rodney. As a matter of fact, he would have yielded the point, rather than allow the matter to go so far as a real quarrel; but it was not easy to yield to Wharton's present tone. Drake's own back was getting up, so to speak.

"I've made a reasonable proposition, I think," he suggested.

"Rubbish!"

"Our rule at St. Winifred's——"

"I've heard enough about St. Winifred's," interrupted Wharton curtly. "I don't want to hear any more. I want to hear whether you're going."

The laughter in the crowded passage died away. All the juniors realised that the matter was getting serious now. Skinner closed one eye at his chums. Wharton was a popular captain of the Remove; but he was least popular when he looked and spoke as he did at present.

Drake's eyes flashed.

He had been on the point of yielding, but that mode of address quite drove out any thought of yielding from his mind.

"No, I'm not going!" he answered, with equal curtness.

"Then you'll be put out!"

"Hold on, Harry!" murmured Frank. "Keep cool, old chap."

"Who's not keeping cool?"

Frank Nugent gave a hopeless shrug of the shoulders. He knew that his chum was past argument when he adopted that tone.

Harry Wharton came towards the table.

"It's time for you fellows to go!" he said grimly.

FOR A FEW MONTHS there was the strange situation of new Greyfriars stories appearing twice a week—one in the *Herald* and one in *The Magnet*. Charles Hamilton's contributions to *The Magnet* were few and far between in these days, but he brought Drake and Rodney into a *Magnet* story at the earliest opportunity—Number 682, entitled *Thin Bunter*. Substitute writers followed suit, but Number 682 proved to be the first and last occasion on which Charles Hamilton mentioned the St. Winifred's pair in *The Magnet* as members of the Greyfriars Remove. The Greyfriars story written specially for the 1922 *Holiday Annual* and entitled *The Rivals of the Remove*

may be taken to relate to the summer of 1921, and recounted in an entertaining manner how Drake and Rodney pretended they couldn't play cricket, and then blackmailed their way into the team, to reveal their true prowess for the first time during the match. *Thin Bunter* and *The Rivals of the Remove* are therefore the only two occasions on which the real Frank Richards took cognisance of what his alter ego, Owen Conquest, was writing in the *Herald*.

Drake's father suffered a number of vicissitudes in fortune. Having once lost and regained his money, he was unlucky enough to undergo another deprivation soon after his son entered Greyfriars, and it became necessary for Drake to leave school. Fortunately he had been able to render Ferrers Locke a service shortly before, and he was taken on as an assistant by the famous detective. After a number of adventures, some complete in one week's instalment and some running to more than one number of the *Herald*, Drake's duties took him back to Greyfriars in a two-story adventure, but this time Rodney was not mentioned. What happened to Rodney I have never been able to discover.* It may well

* The position was still further confused

have been explained in some missing number of the *Herald*: e.g., Rodney could have returned to St. Winifred's—or alternatively the character could have been dropped without explanation, although this would have been somewhat unsatisfactory in view of the close friendship between the two schoolboys from the Benbow.

DRAKE'S ADVENTURES as Ferrers Locke's assistant are strictly beyond the scope of this article, but it may be mentioned that he was an invited guest in the 1921 and 1922 Christmas numbers of *The Magnet*, entitled respectively *The Mystery of the Christmas Candles* and *The Mystery of Mauleverer Towers*, and that on both occasions there was a convenient mystery for him to solve. Such was also the case in the Greyfriars story specially written for the 1923 *Holiday Annual*, *A Shadow Over Greyfriars*, which presented Bunter in the most despicable part he had ever played: this is a story best forgotten, but

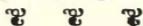
by the substitute writers and no attempt has been made to sort through their work to see if there was any wheat amongst the chaff. Nugent Minor's Lesson in the 1923 *Holiday Annual* is a typical example of such confusion: the story features Rake and Rodney (but not Drake), yet Rake left Greyfriars before Drake and Rodney arrived.

it is interesting to note that, according to C. H. Chapman's illustrations, Drake had gained in stature physically as well as morally since he had left school. There were also short stories by Charles Hamilton about Drake and Ferrers Locke at the back of *Magnet* Numbers 770-773 (the first four of the coloured cover series), but whether these were left over from the *Herald* or whether they were specially written for *The Magnet* it is now impossible to say. From Number 774 the series was taken over by a substitute writer, possibly Hedley Scott who was credited with the authorship of a considerable number of Ferrers Locke serials which subsequently appeared from time to time. Though the change in authorship is not perhaps so perceptible as it is in the case of school tales with their more consistent background, there is no doubt that the later stories were not written so well as those in Numbers 770-773. It seems likely that these were the last four detective stories that Charles Hamilton ever wrote, but it should of course be borne in mind the early stories were occasionally reprinted, as in *The Popular* Numbers 451-488.

Jack Drake returned to Greyfriars as a schoolboy once again

in the Crocker series of 1939, though in disguise and under the name of James Duck, the sort of pun for which Charles Hamilton seems to have such a fondness. Drake also featured in the Lambe series of the same year, although in this case the honours went chiefly to Ferrers Locke.

IT MAY BE SEEN that there was a considerable difference between the weak-willed, good-natured Drake of the early stories, the joking Removite of the middle period who would send Billy Bunter sixpenny Postal Orders made payable at a Post Office some miles away, and the keen young assistant of Ferrers Locke of the later period. It is doubtful whether any other character created by Charles Hamilton (with the exception of Ernest Levison) ever underwent such a transformation. Certainly none other saw so many radical changes in environment in such a short period of time. I hope I shall not be accused of perverseness if I state that, in all the chequered history of Jack Drake, he was never portrayed so humanly and sympathetically as he was in the early stories aboard the *Benbow*. For once in a way Charles Hamilton was unable to improve upon his early work.



GEORGE RICHMOND SAMWAYS

AND ESPECIALLY MAGNET NUMBER 400

By W. O. G. LOFTS

Dear Editor, if you but knew

*The thoughts of each supporter,
And how your book thrills through
and through*

*The globe in ev'ry quarter!
'Tis read by many a boy and man
On train rides, trips, and tram-
ways;*

And I'll support it all I can,

As sure as my name's Samways!

THIS EFFUSION, addressed to the Editor of *The Magnet*, was written by a schoolboy reader in 1912, away back in those early "red cover" days. The words were scarcely those of a budding Poet Laureate, but the youthful rhymester, himself not long in his 'teens, was indeed a budding *Magnet* author. It must have been beyond his wildest dreams at the time, but later he was to become one of those much-maligned scribes, the lowest form of literary life to be found crawling in the Fleet Street gutters (according to some of our own circle!)—the writers of *Magnet* and *Gem* yarns as "stand-ins" for Charles Hamilton.

His name, as divulged in the "poem," was George Samways, and this masterpiece so tickled the Editor—it must have been the "tramways" rhyme that did it—that he printed it in the issue of *The Magnet* Number 249, dated November 16th, 1912.

That was many moons ago, and though George Samways afterwards became associated for many years with The Amalgamated Press, it has been no easy task to trace his history, for he was very much a "lone wolf," and he seems now to have passed entirely into the limbo of lost authors.

As a substitute writer from about 1915 onwards for *The Magnet* and *The Gem* Mr. Samways is best remembered by H. W. Twyman, Rossiter Shepherd, Hedley O'Mant, Fred G. Cook, and others connected with The Amalgamated Press at the time, but he does not appear to have been responsible for many of the full-length stories written by substitute writers. He certainly did write some, however, and such infor-

mation as I have been able to establish about him will I am sure be of interest to *Story Paper Collector* readers, starting with the first published poem already mentioned.

CURIOSLY ENOUGH, George Samways went to school with a writer whom I met recently—and Hedley O'Mant also went to the same school, although at a later date. Unfortunately, for certain reasons this writer and the school concerned must remain unnamed.

In those days *The Magnet* and *The Gem* were quite unjustifiably classed with the "blood and thunder" type of boys' papers that were frowned upon at most schools—and at Samways' school the Head was regarded as a narrow-minded old tyrant, of extremely pious disposition, who put a rigorous ban on the beloved *Companion Papers*, then at the height of their popularity. Any benighted youth caught reading them received a licking and the offending literature was confiscated.

The prohibition of "bloods" at the school was due in the first place to the popularity of John Tregellis's *Britain Invaded* and its sequels in *The Boys' Friend*. Most readers had arranged with their parents to send copies weekly by post, and on the

appropriate day of the week the place was a-flutter with the green sheets. One of the masters caught on, examined the copies, and the result was a stricter banning of all the so-called "bloods"—previously prohibited but enforcement had languished somewhat—*The Magnet* being one of them.

This ban on the *Companion Papers* did not daunt George Samways, who organized an "underground movement" at the school, whereby *The Magnet* and *The Gem* were kept in regular weekly circulation under conditions of the utmost secrecy, and he even held weekly readings in the school playground where, as narrator, he enthralled his youthful audience with the current adventures of Harry Wharton, Tom Merry and Co.

Whilst still at school his early efforts as a writer were confined to rhymes about Greyfriars and its characters and, encouraged by having his "tramways" epic published in *The Magnet*, he continued to bombard the Editor with a succession of jingles, many of which were printed in *The Greyfriars Herald*—supposedly written by different Greyfriars boys.

Inevitably, Samways became fired with the ambition to take up writing and editorial work, although when he left school

he first worked in non-journalistic offices—an estate agent's named Bridgers of Southsea, near his home town of Fareham in Hampshire, and Starret's, the American tool company in London.

WHEN WORLD WAR I broke out and many useful members of the A. P. staff joined up, he offered himself for a job, and was of course very welcome on account of his knowledge of the stories and characters. One of his main jobs was the handling of the *Answers to Correspondents* column, then a regular weekly feature of *The Magnet* along with the Editor's Chat.

His jingles and short pieces for *The Greyfriars Herald* continued to appear—it will be remembered that the *Herald* was at first included as an occasional supplement in *The Magnet* and then had a short run as a separate weekly paper priced at one halfpenny.

Now about this time Charles Hamilton's supply of mss. did not, apparently, keep up with the demand. *The Magnet* and *The Gem*, still very firm favourites among schoolboy readers, simply had to be kept going—hence more “stand-in” writers were needed. Samways, knowing the Greyfriars characters so well,

then commenced to write full-length yarns for *The Magnet*.

Such Greyfriars stories that George Samways is known to have written are not considered amongst the best of the “substitutes,” but his best, *The Sunday Crusaders* in *Magnet* Number 400, dated October 9th, 1915, deserves special mention.

Still fairly fresh from school and bearing, as it were, the cane-marks of his early martyrdom in the cause of *The Magnet*, he wrote *The Sunday Crusaders* as a sort of crusade of his own to erase the stigma of “blood and thunder” from his favourite boys' paper.

The Headmaster, you will recollect, was regarded as a pious and sanctimonious type, and when *The Sunday Crusaders* came out Samways proudly took a number of copies down to his old school and offered them to the Head and other masters for their special behoof and enlightenment—to prove that *The Magnet* was indeed a highly moral paper in publishing a school story based on a religious theme.

The front page portrayed the inside of a church, showing the altar, lectern, etc. The plot of the story was certainly based on religion, though it must be confessed that the boys of Greyfriars went to church mainly under the stern edict of Dr. Locke,

whilst the "rotters" like Skinner, Bolsover, and others of their ilk—and, of course, Bunter—raised strong objections. Right prevailed in the end, however, as it always did, this being the guiding principle of all the A. P. boys' papers.

It is not recorded what impression Samway's "crusading" effort made upon his erstwhile Head, but I gather that the prejudice still remained and the worthy Samways' name was not recorded on some hypothetical Roll of Honour at the school as a literary celebrity!

GEORGE SAMWAYS at a later date wrote many stories about Bessie Bunter for *The School Friend* and stories of Tom Merry and Co. for *The Gem*. It is interesting to record that he wrote most of the tales of Dr. Birchmall, Jack Jolly and Co. at St. Sam's in the centre pages of *The Magnet* for many years—written under the pen-name of Dicky Nugent. The name of the school was, of course, taken from the first part of his name. Many readers will remember the words he wrote to the Greyfriars Song published in the Christmas Double Number of *The Magnet* in 1915.

Apart from this writing Mr. Samways seems to have done very little, although he did contribute stories occasionally to *The Scout* and *The Boys' Friend Library*.

Towards the end of the period of "substitute" stories in *The Magnet* and *The Gem* Mr. Samways appeared in Fleet Street less frequently, and he gradually lost contact with his old associates and immersed himself in provincial newspapers. He did, however, appear in the Southend area in the 1930's, where he set up business as a solutionist, supplying customers, in return for a fee, solutions to prize crossword puzzles, last line to limericks, picture puzzles, *Bullets* competition lines, and football forecasts—before the Football Pools as we know them today really started. George Samways probably did better as an actual competitor in the contests, for he entered for them regularly and won several prizes, some in the region of £250.

But since those days, and since he last shook the dust of Fleet Street from his heels, nothing has been seen of him for years. Like one of the "old soldiers" in the popular song, he seems to have simply faded away!



The Return of Doctor Huxton Rymer

Flashpoint For Treason, by Desmond Reid; *Sexton Blake Library* Number 379: The Amalgamated Press, London, April 1957.

THIS EXCELLENT STORY brings back, after many years of absence, Doctor Huxton Rymer, a favorite character with many of the older group of Blakeites. Huxton Rymer is involved in a spot of treasonable activity in a top-secret area in Australia. While Sexton Blake and Tinker frustrate his plans, Rymer escapes to plot another day. Which is in the old tradition.

For us, this story did not stir memories of Blake *versus* Rymer tales of long ago, for we are not a dedicated Blake fan from away back. Instead, we recalled tales of Rymer, without Blake, in the South Seas that were appearing in *The Pluck Library* in 1915 and 1916, and in the very last issues of first series *The Boys' Realm* in 1916.

From recalling, it was not a long step to taking from our collection of *Pluck* some copies containing these stories. Once

again reading them we found out anew that George Hamilton Teed could indeed write a very readable yarn, and that stories laid in far-away places with the strange sounding names can be extremely attractive.

As in *Flashpoint For Treason* in 1957, where Huxton Rymer was, violence and sudden death were not far distant in 1915.

PEGG: THEN AND NOW!

FROM *The Magnet Library* No. 911, July 25th, 1925:

There is no pier at Pegg, no Picture Palace, no promenade—not even a policeman! Just a few white-washed fishermen's cottages and a crazy old jetty. . . . But perhaps Pegg will develop later on. . . . But this is looking a long way ahead.—“Harry Wharton” in *The Greyfriars Herald* supplement.

It surely was looking a long way ahead, but by 1955 it had come to pass, as we read in Frank Richards' *Billy Bunter's Double*. (We wonder why the whitewashed fishermen?)

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Edited, printed, and published quarterly, maybe less often,
by William Gander, Box 60, Transcona, Manitoba, Canada.
PRINTED AT THE ROOKWOOD PRESS THIS ISSUE 306 COPIES