

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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50 Years On! In February of 1908 Readers of *The Boys' Herald*
And Other A.P. Weeklies Were Intrigued by This Advertisement

50 Years Since the First Magnet Lib'y

WHEN ONE IS YOUNG, looking ahead fifty years seems rather like trying to peer into eternity.

When one is no longer young, looking back fifty years can be done with the utmost ease. It is not at all hard for us, now, to look back fifty years, even though doing so brings no memories of the week in February of 1908 when Number 1 of a modest weekly paper called *The Magnet Library* was placed on sale.

It is doubtful if anyone concerned with the preparation of that first issue paused to wonder whether the paper on which he was working would be more than a faint memory in 1958. If he did, he need not have worried. But it is unlikely that he could, even with the help of a crystal ball, have dreamed of the fame which *The Magnet*, its principal author Frank Richards, and Greyfriars people and places would gather to themselves in the half-century to come.

In 1908 *The Magnet* could not have been regarded as being of much importance. What was it? Just a 16-page plus cover story-paper for boys, its main reason for being lying in the need for a replacement in the halfpenny

field for *The Gem Library*, then being raised to the higher level of a penny paper, and a further need on the part of the Editor to keep his favorite author busy writing stories mornings as well as afternoons.

Not all boys in 1908 could afford a penny paper every week, so rather than have those who could not afford one turn to an opposition paper, a substitute was provided. The same thing was done two years later: when *The Magnet* went to a penny, its place in the halfpenny field was taken—with less success—by *The Empire Library*.

Evidently there was a limit beyond which the idea of replacing one halfpenny paper with another could not be pushed. If that had not proven to be the case, in the five years following 1908 *The Magnet* and *The Gem* might have had half a dozen "companion papers" of a similar type.

One thing is sure: the keenest-visioned person, the most adept at peering into the future, on the staff of *The Magnet* in 1908, would never have dreamed that after fifty years the paper would be "alive" in the affections of more adults than ever before; that the name of Billy Bunter would be a "household word" and Harry Wharton and Co. familiar friends; that the saga of Greyfriars would be a

(Concluded on Page 220)

The Story Paper Collector

No. 65 - Vol. 3

Priceless

WARWICK AND BASIL REYNOLDS

By W. O. G. LOFTS

"IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY" is an old saying that applies very aptly where art and the Reynolds family are concerned. Warwick Reynolds, best known to readers of *The Story Paper Collector*, perhaps, as an illustrator of *The Gem* and other Amalgamated Press boys' papers just prior to and during the first World War, came of a family of artists, and his father was the very well-known Warwick Reynolds whose drawings had set a new standard for Victorian periodicals such as *The Boys of England*, *The Young Briton*, and many others.

Warwick Reynolds, Senior, had seven sons and four daughters. Two sons died in youth, and four of the remaining five grew up to become artists of repute—including of course young

Warwick. By some strange twist of fate, one son showed not the slightest inclination to draw, and earned his living as a commercial traveller. The daughters also were not interested in painting and drawing, so we will not dwell on them any further.

Our Warwick was born in 1880, and at an early age became very interested in the world of art. But strangely enough his father tried to discourage him, and it is very fortunate that young Warwick, by resisting parental advice, did prove that he, no less than the others of his line, was indeed a "born artist."

In his boyhood he developed a passion for drawing animals and at thirteen, a year before he commenced art lessons seriously,

he began to haunt the London Zoo, where the "inmates" became his real-life subjects. For hours at a time he watched the motions of the animals—the swing of the shoulders and the swish of the tails. The great value of these observations may be judged by the fact that Warwick used many of his early sketches some thirty years later, by which time he had become a celebrity as the foremost commercial animal illustrator. His work was closely associated with the writings of H. Mortimer Batten, the famous author of nature stories, who became a great friend of his.

Like many an artist before and since, Warwick Reynolds found the early going full of ups and downs. His first published animal drawings were for *Ally Sloper*, whose well-known Editor, Gilbert Dalziel, gave him every encouragement. These were comic drawings, and very different from his style in later years. He must often have blushed for them.

He studied for a while at an art school in St. John's Wood, London, not far from the famous Lord's Cricket Ground, and later went to Glasgow, where he soon joined the staff of *The Glasgow Weekly Record*. Then, to develop his flair for painting, he settled for a time in Paris, always the

Mecca of the aspiring painter. Warwick Reynolds did more than aspire in this field, for he reaped considerable success with his water colours, some of which were exhibited at the Royal Academy.

BUT IT IS essentially as a black and white artist that he is remembered by "old boys' books" collectors, and he excelled in this branch of art. His line work was characteristically vigorous, immaculate in style, and detail perfect. In the year 1910 The Amalgamated Press provided Warwick Reynolds with an even wider scope, as an illustrator of boys' stories. Here was a really first class artist (compared with some working on the A. P. at the time) drawing for *The Empire Library*, *The Dreadnought*, and *The Penny Popular*, and later adorning *The Gem* with pictures that one could tell at a glance were the work of a craftsman. He was first employed on *Gem* serials and later was responsible for the famous "St. Jim's Gallery" illustrations in that paper. In 1916, when R. J. Macdonald joined the R.N.V.R., Warwick Reynolds took over the weekly illustrations of the St. Jim's stories, a job that he carried on with conspicuous

A.P. Luncheon In Fleet Street

ON THE NEXT TWO PAGES is presented a reproduction of a photograph of a group of staff members and contributors of the Amalgamated Press Limited. The occasion was a luncheon in a Fleet Street restaurant, held, it is thought, in or about 1925.

It is to be regretted that the picture is not more clear, but it is the best that could be done with the print from which the printing plate was made.

The photographic print was supplied by W. O. G. Lofts, who wishes to express here his grateful thanks to W. Howard Baker, Editor of *The Sexton Blake Library*, and Basil Reynolds, Editor of *Tiny Tots*, for the help they gave him to identify several persons in the group who were unknown to him.

This is a list, provided by Mr. Lofts, of those present:

Back Row, Standing, Left to Right

- 1—G. H. Teed (*Sexton Blake Writer*).
- 2—H. McDowell (*Answers*).
- 3—J. E. McKibbin (*Writer*).
- 4—E. J. Wass (*Answers*).
- 5—Bill Groves (*Answers Lib'y*).

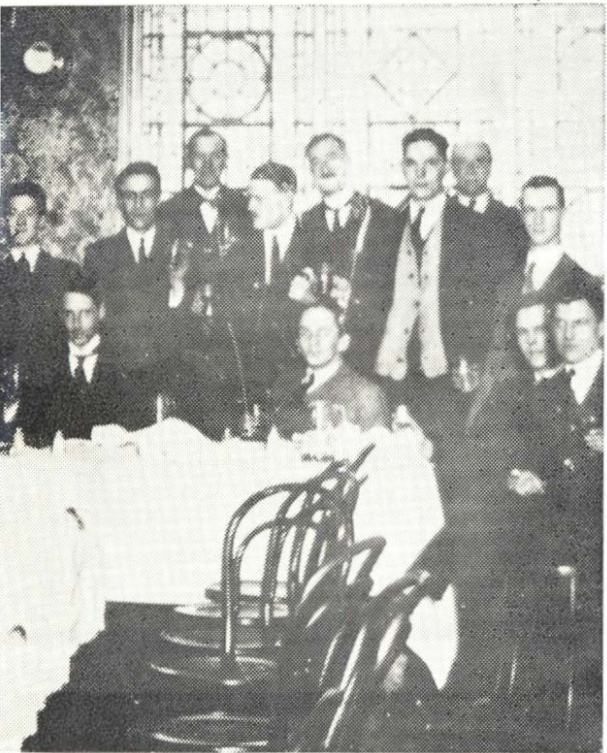
- 6—H. T. Cauldwell (Editor, *The Nelson Lee Library*; later, Editor of *Modern Wonder* and *Mickey Mouse Weekly*).
- 7—Alfred Edgar (*Writer*).
- 8—E. L. McKeag (*Girls' Papers*).
- 9—Balfour Ritchie (Editor of *The Boys' Friend Library*).
- 10—Clive R. Fenn (*Writer*).
- 11—E. Fearn (*Girls' Papers*).
- 12—G. M. Dodshon (*Artist*).
- 13—Bernard Smith (*Boys' Papers*).

Front Row, Sitting, Left to Right

- 1—L. H. Pratt (Editor, *Marvel, Thriller, The Sexton Blake Library* 1915-1955).
- 2—J. H. Valda (*Artist*).
- 3—H. W. Twyman (Editor of *The Union Jack, Detective Weekly, Detective Library, Thriller Library*).
- 4—Ernest Harris—partly hidden (*Answers Library*).
- 5—Hedley O'Mant (*Magnet*; later, Editor of *Ranger and Pilot*).
- 6—S. Rossiter Shepherd (*Union Jack Supplement*).
- 7—W. Stanton Hope (Editor, *Chuckles, and Writer*).
- 8—Harold May (Editor of *Nelson Lee Library* 1915-1928).
- 9—H. Wright (Editor of *The Boys' Realm, New Series*, after J. N. Pentelow).
- 10—Non-A. P.
- 11—Arthur Aldcroft (*Gem and Penny Popular* reprints).



Group of A. P. Staff Members & Contributors at a —
(See preceding page)



—Luncheon in a Fleet Street Restaurant, circa 1925

(Photo : Printed by Reliance Press, Transcona)

Warwick and Basil Reynolds

(Continued from Page 212)

success for a matter of three years, until June of 1919 when the war was over and R. J. Macdonald returned.

Warwick Reynolds continued for a time to draw for The Amalgamated Press, and as a free-lance in various branches of art his work became increasingly sought after by London editors. Amongst the many he contributed to were such magazines as *The Strand*, *Tatler*, *Passing Show*, *The Illustrated London News*, and many others.

TALL AND RATHER GAUNT, Warwick Reynolds was also outstanding as a personality. His swarthy face surmounted by a crop of black hair combed down over his forehead, his was a well-known and much beloved figure in Fleet Street and its environs. He moved to Glasgow and there in 1926, shortly before Christmas, his death occurred—an all too premature end to a fine and popular artist. He was only 46 years old, and the shock of his sudden death in the night turned Mrs. Reynolds' hair white, Mr. Reynolds having been in good health.

Their son, yet another Warwick, died tragically early. The boy, whose brief life certainly

proved "it runs in the family," passed away in his 'teens. It had been his habit to sketch animals in the Edinburgh Zoo, just as his father had sketched them in London. So good were they that his father was able to use them for references in his own work. If he had lived, apparently this lad would have had a very brilliant career in the world of art.

Our Warwick left, besides a widow, two daughters who were themselves markedly gifted and who studied at various art schools. They both married, and do not practice art commercially.

THE DEATH OF Warwick's son seemed to be the end of any prospect of a Reynolds dynasty at The Fleetway House. But the Reynolds tradition still lives there in the person of Basil Reynolds, a nephew of Warwick. He formerly held the position of Art Editor of the three comic papers, *Tiny Tots*, *Playhour*, and *Jack and Jill*, but now is Editor of *Tiny Tots*.

Many older readers will remember the famous Nugget Boot Polish poster depicting a chubby, curly-haired child holding a tin of Nugget to his eye in the manner of Gussy of St. Jim's and his monocle, and saying "By Jove!" The sitter for that poster was Basil Reynolds, and the painter his commercial artist father, Syd-

ney Basil Reynolds, brother of Warwick.

Young Basil also was brought up in the atmosphere of art, and on leaving school went straight out into the world to earn his living by drawing single joke cartoons for the comic papers and illustrating books for the younger children.

When he was about sixteen Basil knew a wonderful old man who was quite a character and had the old English name of John Rowlands. He was a sort of Jack of All Trades and a clever Punch and Judy man. He was also a phrenologist, learned in reading bumps. One day when reading Basil Reynolds' bumps, Mr. Rowlands predicted that he would, some time in the future, become a successful animal artist. At that time Basil did not have the slightest interest in that type of work and he did not pay much attention to the prediction. The phrenologist, incidentally, was himself an artist, and older readers may remember his work on the covers of the old *Illustrated Police Gazette*, a sensationally gory type of magazine much sought after today by collectors.

THE YEARS ROLLED BY, and when *Mickey Mouse Weekly* was started by Willbank Publications in 1936 Basil became one of the artists engaged on the

paper. Its first Editor was a woman, Silvey Clarke, who formerly was in charge of the Amalgamated Press comic paper *My Favourite*. (Its Editor at a later period was H. T. C. ["Jimmy"] Caudwell, who was also in charge of *Modern Wonder*, and was the last Editor in charge of *The Nelson Lee Library*.) Many comics collectors will remember the popular comic strip, "Skit and Skat," in *Mickey Mouse Weekly*. This was Basil's work, as were many others.

One day the Editor (H. T. C. Caudwell) decided to start a nature-study strip featuring various animals. An artist was required to illustrate this and the Editor suggested that Basil try it. Not in the least interested in that type of work, Basil found to his great surprise that he could draw animals, and from that day until the end of the series he continued doing the strip.

Basil is interested in all drawings and illustrations produced by his late uncle, Warwick Reynolds. A keen collector of them, he would be very pleased to buy any examples that are available for sale, particularly those which appeared in the London magazines in the 1920-26 period.

In February of 1956 Basil left Odham's, who were now running *Mickey Mouse Weekly*, and

went to The Amalgamated Press, where, as already stated, he became Art Editor of *Tiny Tots*, *Playhour*, and *Jack and Jill*, and where he is now Editor of *Tiny Tots*.

In his studio in Hertfordshire, Basil can show you his family tree, which from the 18th century has produced an impressive number of artists, many of whom exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy. A strange characteristic of the family tree is the short life of many of those on it. Basil had two brothers, Terence Mann and Donald, who died at 18 and 28 respectively. Both were, of course, artists.

It seems as if the old Punch and Judy man's prediction came true. And Basil's son, Christopher, aged eleven, takes a deep interest in drawing and painting, especially his father's work. So it seems also that the youngest scion of the family is going to follow, in the true tradition, in the footsteps of the Reynolds.



¶ Articles about Warwick Reynolds in earlier issues of *The Story Paper Collector* are *Warwick Reynolds: An Appreciation*, Parts 1 and 2, by C. F. F. Rickard, in Numbers 11 and 13, January-March and July-September, 1943; Mr. Rickard told of Warwick Reynolds' work as illustrator for *The St. Jim's Gallery* in Number 24, October-December, 1945.

JOHN P. QUAINÉ

A LONG CAREER as a bookseller came to an end with the death on August 7th, 1957, of John P. Quaine, of South Yarra, Victoria. In a newspaper report Mr. Quaine was referred to as the last of the antiquarian booksellers.

John P. Quaine was born in Bendigo, which was one of the well-known gold-mining towns in Victoria, in the first week of January, 1883. In an article published several years ago, and titled *My Book-Hunting in Bendigo Sixty*

Years Ago, Mr. Quaine describing his boyhood wrote:

The happiest hours of my boyhood were those spent amongst books. I was surrounded by them from babyhood, and as soon as I was able to forage for myself, though I had barrowloads of books on all sides, I went searching for more.

Books were bought from bookshops, from secondhand shops selling miscellaneous goods, or retrieved from rubbish dumps deposited in old deserted mining

shafts or along the Bendigo creek. It was in those days that he laid the foundations of his collection of "bloods" which later grew to be one of the best in the world. It was then, too, that he developed those tastes which led him to enter the secondhand book trade.

Before this happened, he had moved to Melbourne, married, and earned his living as a wood-working machinist. In 1916 he opened his first bookstall in the Prahan Markets, and before the year ended he was in business in his bookshop in Commercial Road which he carried on successfully for over forty years.

His occupation now being congenial, it was not long before Mr. Quainé commenced writing on the books he loved and on life and crimes in the nineteenth century. These articles were, mainly, published in Melbourne newspapers, though quite a number of them appeared in the Sydney *Famous Detective Stories*. He also contributed to English amateur journals which specialized in the field of "bloods" and "old boys'" books and journals. With the advent of radio he broadcast many talks on these and other subjects. Many of his articles and stories would repay collection and re-publication in book form.

Through all his bookselling and writing activities Mr. Quainé yet found time to carry on a voluminous correspondence with many people and was ever prepared to give advice and information to all who sought it. Among the "blood" collectors with whom he corresponded regularly were Barry Ono, Frank Jay, and John Medcraft.

He was a great help in starting and building up my collection of "bloods." The great bulk of the items in it came from him. He once wrote to me of the death of a well-known collector and commented:

He had some nice Australiana. So there will be another ghoulish rush for the rare items. Has it ever struck you what a hungry lot of unfeeling wolves are collectors? Some chap dies and the first comment is, "What will happen to his books?"

In his writings and conversation Mr. Quainé was both forthright and unambiguous, and with these traits there was that strong sense of humour so characteristic of his personality. We have lost a good friend, a helpful bookseller, and a fellow-collector. He leaves behind him his widow, three sons, and a daughter.

—STANLEY L. LARNACH

Randwick, Sydney, Australia.
September 9th, 1957.

50 Years Since First Magnet

(Concluded from Page 210)

part of the folklore of Britain; that *The Magnet* would sail through one World War with flying colors, only to go down in another with scarcely a struggle; that Frank Richards would still be writing Greyfriars stories, with more than twenty of them published as hard-cover books; or that Greyfriars and its people would have appeared in homes across the land through the medium of something known as Television.

All this and much more would in 1908 be hidden from members of the *Magnet* staff in the mists of years to come.

* * *

MARKING IN FEBRUARY of 1958 the 50th Anniversary of the founding of *The Magnet Library*, Herbert Leckenby with the aid of his contributors who supplied many fine articles on the subject, issued an excellent "double number" of his *The Collectors' Digest*. This is something we would like to have done with *The Story Paper Collector*, but circumstances did not permit. Being behind schedule a little permits us to mention in this January issue an event that occurred in February.

—W. H. G.

Sexton Blake Authors

THERE WAS AN ERROR and also an omission in Leonard Packman's contribution to *The Story Paper Collector* No. 64.

The error: Author's pen-name should be given as *Barre Lyndon*, real name Alfred Edgar.

The omission: Author's pen-name, *Peter Meriton*, real name John Hunter.



I Wish to Obtain . . .

—S.P.C. Nos. 1-50.—Tom Langley, 340 Baldwins Lane, Hall Green, Birmingham 29, England.

—S.P.C. Nos. 1-40.—Howard W. Sharpe, P.O. Box 81, Box Hill E.11, Victoria, Australia.

—S.P.C. Nos. 3, 4, 6 to 17, 20 to 25, 27 to 31.—Wilfried Myers, 69 Walnut, Struthers, O., U.S.A.

—*Schoolboys' Own Library* Nos. 9, 16, 40, 58, 157, 264.—T.W. Porter, Old Fields, Corngreaves Road, Cradley Heath, Staffs, England.



¶ *The Scout*, official Boy Scouts Association publication, will observe its 50th Anniversary in April of this year.

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