

# THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JULY 1959  
No. 70 :: Vol. 3

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## THE LANDLADY & CLIFF HOUSE

THE FRONT PAGE of *The Story Paper Collector* Number 68, the reproduction of *The School Friend*, brought back many happy memories. I remember so clearly buying the first number of *The School Friend*, but after a few weeks I ceased to buy or read it. I cannot state that I stopped because I instinctively sensed a change in authorship or in the style of writing. I knew nothing of such things. As a *Magnet* reader I should have taken the Cliff House stories in my stride, but I just didn't. The fine article by W. O. G. Lofts on the *School Friend* Cliff House stories goes a long way, perhaps, to explain why I turned away from them after the first few numbers in 1919.

But the mystery is the greater because I was a great reader of girls' publications in those days, from stories of mill girls, complete with shawls and clogs (the mill-owners' sons were either their aspirants, or the villains

of the piece), to stories of girls who, having no mothers to guide them, took the wrong turning and were shamefully deserted at the altar. Who knows, perhaps *The School Friend* wasn't "adult" enough!

When still at school, I once submitted an illustrated joke to an Amalgamated Press editor. The illustration and the joke were very kindly rejected and, as a "free gift" and consolation, the editor sent me a parcel of back numbers of various girls' publications of the day. Many of them had a semi-religious tone, full of sweet stories and moral homilies.

This put me further in the slough of despond but, fortunately, by the time I reached the ripe old age of fourteen I had outgrown this temporary mental aberration and left girls' papers far behind me. I concentrated then, in my new-found sanity, on stories of a more peaceable nature, such as school-

boy tales and stories of piracy, highwaymen, and murder!

Seriously, though, my knowledge of the Cliff House girls, via *The Magnet*, once stood me in good stead. I had once to deal with a landlady who was reputed to be as hard-bitten, sour, and grasping as our music-hall comics would have us believe them to be. In conversation with her one day I discovered that she used to read *The School Friend* in the 1920's, and she still remembered the names of pupils and mistresses of Cliff House. After a few observations on my part she began, with eyes glistening and cheeks glowing, to pour out her nostalgic memories of those stories and characters to me, like a flood which had too long been kept in check.

I assure you, music-hall comics are all wrong about landladies!

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## Mr. Quelch: Horace?

THE ARTICLE by Roger Jenkins in *The Story Paper Collector* Number 67, *The Career of Mr. Quelch*, was very good. Although the article ends with a footnote stating that "Horace" was not officially one of Mr.

Quelch's Christian names, I seem to remember an early *Magnet* story in which Alonzo Todd is the innocent means of causing the Head-mistress of Cliff House to believe that Mr. Quelch has a more than soft spot for her. When Miss Primrose keeps a rendezvous with the unsuspecting Henry Samuel, the name she breathes is "Horace!" This was one occasion, anyway, when Frank Richards gave Mr. Quelch the Christian name of Horace.

—MAURICE KUTNER

## Duncan Storm

THE PEN-NAME Duncan Storm was used by Gilbert Floyd for serials and complete stories he wrote for *The Boys' Friend* from 1915 to 1925. He was at one time Editor of *The Boys' Realm*; in later life was a Town Councillor. —W. O. G. LOFTS

## E. L. McKeag

CORRECTION—S.P.C. Number 69, page 266, foot of column 2: Due to a typing error it was stated that E. L. McKeag wrote stories for *The Champion* and *The Thriller*. The papers that Mr. McKeag wrote for were *The Champion* and *The Triumph*.

# The Story Paper Collector

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No. 70—Vol. 3

Priceless

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## RED DAWN OVER SUNNY BAY

A SATIRE By ARTHUR MOYSE

WE WHO LIVE from day to day and cull our knowledge of the world around us from the scatty headlines of our daily press love to believe that our society grows worser and worser. We may delude ourselves that the scare headlines of the mass press is ephemeral and that we as intelligent people can sort the dross from the gold, but each day leaves in our mind a little gritty residue of hate. We ponder and we despair when, in our wisdom, we review the current state of the industrial scene, the 'teen age problem, and the situation out east or west or north or at times, in our more despondent moods, down south.

We love to dream of that golden age when food was cheap, cigarettes a handful for a half-penny, the belted aristocracy

wore trim military moustaches, women glided across the floor, and the labouring classes were given to hard work, low wages, and Cockney witticisms.

To most of us that golden age came to an end in August of 1914 and the first thin crackle of rifle fire split wide the fabric of that dream and through its ever-widening rent poured the grey, rat-like dawn of the new misbegotten era.

As we daily face the harsh problems of our day-to-day existence we tend to imagine and then to believe that there was a world wherein the anxiety and the pain of our particular moment did not exist. Within that world all problems had a final solution, poverty was a joke, and death did not exist. In the political field the belief in this degenerate romantic escapism leads

to the fanatical extremism of the right and the bitter fratricidal and sterile nationalism that has plagued the world for as long as man was able to record his history. For these are the dead lands where the political hucksters roam like jackalshawk-ing the pseudo-glories of the past to solve the problems of the present.

**I**N THE GREY MORNINGS of my childhood I gladly accepted the comics and the magazines as keys to an age that I could envy but I knew would never be mine. *The Magnet* and *The Gem* offered me a "real" world of peace, of prosperity, and of plenty. A world of ivy-covered schools and warm studies, of flickering fires and chiming bells.

It was the comics that gave me my true "false" world. There in the pages of *Chips*, *Comic Cuts*, *Film Fun*, *Comic Life*, *Jester*, *Funny Wonder*, *Jingles*, *The Jolly Comic*, and *The Rainbow* was a world wherein I could be king. A world where the villain could and would get his just deserts and not a knighthood, a world whose final frame ended with a chicken tea and not the Boys' Counter at the Labour Exchange, for this was a world where right was always triumphant and nobody went hungry, not even the cats.

There are those who have always condemned the "comics" for not facing up to the stern realities of this world, and the realist will point to the bleeding, weeping world around us and ask if it is ever reflected in the comics' flimsy pages. If we had accepted these comics as our only evidence of our world their opponents might have had a case, but the crude hard world beats down on us every moment of our waking day and the daily press screams that Armageddon, like prosperity, is just around the corner.

On every corner the phoney prophets of calamity howl their death songs and the banker and the beggar weep in the shadow of the golden calf.

To us who collect these fading comics they cry, "Fool, fool, fool, here is the real world, mad and crazily dancing down the road to hell and you would know nothing of it, for you seek a world that never existed." But I rise and striking a pose reminiscent of a Victorian ham actor cry, "Stay!"

In the imagined silence that follows I declaim:

**G**ENTLEMEN, I will show you a document that in my opinion can rank with the American Declaration of Independence, the Communist

Manifesto, and Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*. I will present to you a document that foreshadowed all that you profess to condemn. This is not some obscure leaflet, some badly-printed pamphlet, or a yellowing radical news-sheet prophesying in Biblical prose the new millenium, but a simple coloured comic such as you so scornfully condemn.

I offer for your inspection, gentlemen, a copy of *Puck*, price one penny and published on Thursday, the 8th of August, 1914—remember that date, gentlemen—and numbered 524, Volume XXI.

On the 4th of August, 1914, Great Britain and her Empire declared war on the German Empire. Four days previous to the publication of this comic the greatest two powers in Europe had advanced to wage the bitterest war the world had ever known, yet what do we find on the front page of *Puck*? A cry to arms? No. A call to patriots? No. The addresses of recruiting offices for the benefit of readers' parents? Again, no. Let us examine what we do find.

The scene is laid for us by a view of such peace and tranquility that we are almost forced to question the date of this document that lies before us. It is an English seaside town called Sunny Bay and the sea is blue

and the sky is a bright yellow. There on the pink sands rises a well-built sand-castle bravely flying a Union Jack while in the background rises a green-topped cliff. On the horizon a pert little paddle-steamer puffs its careless way across the calm blue sea.

This, gentlemen, is the scene. This is the pseudo-golden world, that those who condemn us complain we will only accept.

But let us examine this document a little more, gentlemen.

THE FIRST of the seven frames exposes the whole dastardly business. We have Jolly Joe Jinks, the ventriloquist, a minor employer of labour. He is a simple man, running his small business on an extremely narrow profit margin. Like tens of thousands of other small business men he has to partake of the actual labour of his own industry to pay his way. But what happens? The two tiny Merry Little Clowns who are employed by Jolly Joe Jinks have, without any warning, thrown down a demand for increases in their weekly share of the industry that obviously is impossible for any employer to agree to, for this is blackmail pure and simple.

*Puck* claims, and I quote, *The two little clowns who'd been helping me give a ventriloquist show at Sunny Bay went on strike, and*

*refused to perform unless I gave them more pay, more jam, and more sugar in their tea.*

Yet I will maintain and prove that the first picture frame clearly shows four tiny Merry Little Clowns forcing their exhorbitant demands onto a harrassed employer.

I find this mistake in numbers extremely ominous.

They are demanding a farthing a week more on their wages, jam on their bread, and two lumps of sugar in their tea. We should all like more jam on our bread and more sugar in our tea, but it is obvious that a small entertainment industry such as that run by Jolly Joe Jinks could not comply with these outrageous demands.

Whatever merits there may have been in the tiny Merry Little Clowns' case is thrown away by this contemptible attempt to blackmail the public who must in the final analysis have to pay these exhorbitant and senseless demands.

Nowhere is there any suggestion of arbitration, nowhere is there any suggestion of trying to increase production, only a blatant demand to an industry that obviously cannot bear an increase in its overheads.

Frame 2 shows Jolly Joe Jinks forced by this mad and unneces-

sary strike to improvise to meet his public responsibilities. What does he do? He disguises two parrots as Darby and Joan and as such he will use them in his ventriloquist act. Who can be blamed when employers are forced to use bird labour if human demands so much from their industry? Let these tiny Merry Little Clowns ask themselves if at any time they have been willing to share in the losses incurred by Jolly Joe Jinks. It is so easy for the tiny Merry Little Clowns to make their inane demands for more jam on their bread, but in all honesty let them question their moral position.

I would not condemn them, gentlemen, but condemn those who, though staying in the background themselves, egg these foolish people on, and I would again draw your attention, gentlemen, to the sinister fact that four tiny Merry Little Clowns are involved yet only two are mentioned.

**F**FRAME 3 shows Jolly Joe Jinks giving his performance. He has covered the parrots with masks and there against a background of blue sea, yellow sands, and pink cliff he fulfills his public obligation. As a nation we should be proud indeed that we have men of the mettle of



Jolly Joe Jinks. To the tiny Merry Little Clowns we can offer no sympathy. Their irresponsible action, their flouting of the public welfare has recoiled upon them and an angry society can only condemn.

But wait, gentlemen, for this is not the end of this industrial tragedy. The foul climax of this sequence of evil acts must now unfold before our horror-stricken eyes.

I would ask the women to leave, for like most civilized men I believe that there are certain things that concern the male only and that it is his duty to shield them from the innocent eyes of the weaker of our species.

In frame 4 the tiny Merry Little Clowns are attaching lumps of sugar to toy balloons. These are the very people who clamoured so loudly for two lumps of sugar in their tea. What contemptible hypocrisy on their part. Meanwhile, in the far distance alone atop a cliff, a solitary sailor armed only with a spy-glass sweeps the distant horizon. Gentlemen, these are sad times when people such as the tiny Merry Little Clowns can batten on a nation in its hour of peril.

**T**HE REASON for the toy balloons and the lump sugar becomes terribly obvious in frame 5. As the toy balloons rise

into the air they drift over the backcloth used by Jolly Joe Jinks for his ventriloquist show and the sugar is seen by the parrots.

In frame 6 the wicked result of this dastardly act is made evident. The two parrots, still wearing their masks, flutter into the air after the lump sugar. This is industrial anarchy gone mad. This, gentlemen, is the lunacy of the Luddites. This is machine-wrecking of a type that we in this country have not witnessed for over a hundred years.

Gentlemen, there are occasions when words cannot convey the emotions that one feels or the bitterness within one's heart. This simple scene of blue waters and yellow sands, the little man with his wife and tiny children, the old people in the autumn of their lives, the young girl in the middle distance leaning on the breakwater and wearing a bathing suit with a terrific plunging neckline—or maybe she is wearing her bathing suit back to front—all these people, these little people, find their lives in danger because of the insane antics of a gang of irresponsible industrial saboteurs. There is only one word that can be used, gentlemen, and I use it. That word, gentlemen, is criminal.

Frame 7 shows the culmination of this senseless tragedy.

In all situations of this kind

there are those who panic and in panicking affect those around them. Instead of the audience standing by Jolly Joe Jinks they have allowed themselves to be turned into a mob by this stupid minority.

Jolly Joe Jinks lies battered and torn among the broken remnants of his show, while the unthinking audience trudge off across the yellow sands towards the green cliffs and the pier that lies beyond. A red sun sinks into the blue sea and the little paddle steamer puffs upon its way against a background of pink sky.

The tiny Merry Little Clowns stand there laughing.

**T**HIS, GENTLEMEN, is the scene, this is the record, here is the document. Was there no Charlotte Corday willing to do her nut in an attempt to stay this recorded villainy, did no moralist among the board of directors attempt to stay the

left hand of the artist and the author?

This, gentlemen, I maintain is mob propaganda at its worst.

Who can blame the illiterate masses if in their anger at that which they are unable to comprehend they resort to violence when our intelligentsia appear to sanction it?

Gentlemen, we live in sad and bitter times and I would point out to those who condemn us for spending our time collecting these simple comics that it is not us, but they, who are at fault.

On August the 8th, 1914, all that you profess to abhor was foreshadowed on the front page of *Puck*. This was the writing on the wall, this was the message in the sand. Not in shifting dust or creeping fire but in coloured ink the message was offered you, but you, gentlemen, refused to read the lesson.

Ask Jolly Joe Jinks.

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## G. R. SAMWAYS

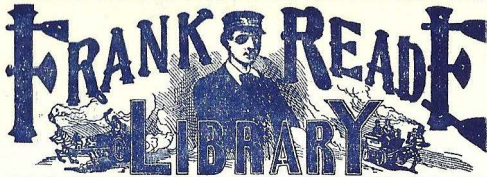
**I**N NUMBER 2 of S.P.C., dated January-March, 1941, we reprinted from *The Magnet* No. 249, November 16, 1912, a poem by a youthful reader, G. R. Sam-

ways, little thinking that we would some day, through the kindness of W. O. G. Lofts, be able to present the views of Mr. Samways on *Magnet* and *Gem* affairs. They will be incorporated in an article by Mr. Lofts in *The Story Paper Collector* Number 71.



"Noname's" Latest and Best Stories are Published in This Library.

# FRANK READE LIBRARY

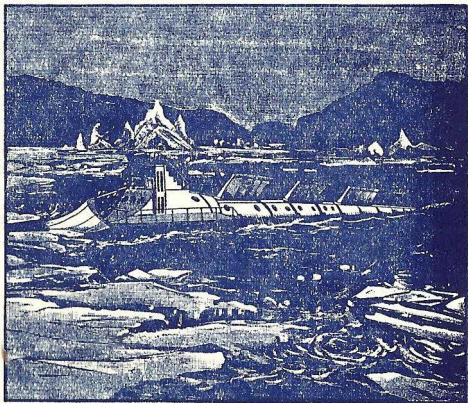


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Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1893, by FRANK FORTNEY, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

**FRANK READE JR.'S** NEW ELECTRIC SUBMARINE BOAT "THE EXPLORER,"  
OR, TO THE NORTH POLE UNDER THE ICE.  
By "MORAMEL"



Frank Reade Library Number 17, January 14th, 1893  
(See Next Page)

## UNDER THE POLAR ICE SIXTY-SIX YEARS AGO

ONE DAY LAST YEAR people around the world were intrigued by the report that the United States Submarine *Nautilus* had completed a trip beneath the north polar ice. In the excitement that was aroused, few seemed to remember that it had been done long before.

As proof of this, we submit Number 17 of *Frank Reade Library*, which carries the date of January 14th, 1893. A reproduction of that story paper's front cover is printed on the previous page.

The title of the story is long: *Frank Reade Jr.'s New Electric Submarine The Explorer; or, To the North Pole Under the Ice*, with the author operating under the odd pseudonym "Noname."

The first chapter tells of the launching of Frank Reade's just-completed new submarine boat, constructed in his own works at Readestown, U. S. A., and of his intention to travel in it under the ice to the North Pole. Frank had diving suits with which he and members of his crew could leave the submarine while it was submerged. There were air reservoirs on the backs of them. *The Explorer*, being a Frank Reade

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product, did not need any trial runs:

"When will you make your start for the North Pole?" asked Harmon, after the launching.

"Tomorrow," replied Frank.

Many exciting adventures befell Frank Reade and his crew on their voyage, the crew appearing to have consisted of only two men, Pomp, a Negro, and Barney, who was Irish and possessed a rather outrageous brogue.

It happened that Mr. Harmon's son, Roger, had been lost in the Arctic five years earlier and, not very surprisingly, Frank found him and brought him back to civilization.

While later adventurers in the North have seen only ice at the North Pole, Frank Reade and his companions found an open-water Polar Sea. No doubt it froze over since *The Explorer* was there.

—W. H. G.

WE REALLY do know better: at the foot of page 278 of this issue it is stated that S.P.C. Number 2 was dated January-March, 1941. Actually it was dated for April-June of that year.

# WHERE ARE THE OLD SEXTON BLAKE AUTHORS NOW?

By W. O. G. LOFTS

## PART ONE

Dear Mr. Lofts:

*Can you tell me what became of "Gilbert Chester"? I used to enjoy his tales of Blake so much, and often wonder what happened to him. Do you know if he is still alive?*

THE ABOVE TYPE of letter I receive quite often, and I always answer to the best of my ability. Indeed, it may be interesting to readers to know what has happened to many of the old authors of *The Sexton Blake Library* and *The Union Jack* whose stories thrilled us so much in the 1920's and 1930's. Many are, alas, dead, but some are still with us, and so this article will, I hope, satisfy many readers as to what actually happened to their particular favourite Sexton Blake author.

According to my records nearly two hundred authors have written of Blake, and it is impossible for me to list all of them. I will therefore include only authors who wrote consistently over a period. Further details

I will gladly furnish by letter.

Where a pen-name is used, the real name of the author is given in parentheses.

Ladbroke Black, also Paul Urquhart (Ladbroke Lionel Day Black).—Died in 1940.

Allan Blair (William J. Bayfield).—Believed dead, but not confirmed.

Stacey Blake (Real name).—Now living in the North of England, aged well over 80. Spends most of his time painting.

Harry Blyth, also Hal Meredith (Harry Blyth).—Creator of Sexton Blake. Died in 1898 of typhoid fever, aged 46. I have met his son who lives at Broadstairs.

John G. Brandon (Real name).—Died in 1940.

Coutts Brisbane, also Reid Whitley (R. Coutts Armour).—Died in the 1940-42 period.

E. S. Brooks (Real name).—Now famous as novel writer "Berkeley Gray" and "Victor Gunn."

Lewis Carlton (Real name).  
—Was known to be alive about four years ago; was seen in Fleet Street, London. Believed to be living in the Devon area.

Gilbert Chester (H. H. Clifford Gibbons).—Was last seen about four years ago, in the Brighton area, living in poor circumstances. No further trace of him.

John Creasey (Real name).—Very famous novel writer with a host of pen-names. Lives in the Bournemouth area.

Mark Darran (Norman Goddard).—Killed in action in the First World War.

Maurice B. Dix (Real name).  
—Died in Canada a few years ago.

Sidney Drew (Edgar Joyce Murray).—Dead, but no positive date known.

John Drummond (John Newton Chance).—Runs an hotel on the Isle of Wight; still writes a novel occasionally.

Walter Edwards (Walter Shute).—Died in 1939.

Gwyn Evans (Real name).—Died in 1939.

Martin Frazer (Percy A. Clarke).—By the time this appears in print may have retired from The Amalgamated Press, where he is in charge of some of the Christmas annuals.

S. Gordon Shaw (Real name).  
—Died in the 1940's.

Richard Goyne (Real name).  
—Died suddenly in March, 1954, at the age of 54.

W. Murray Graydon (Real name).—Died in the early 1930's.

Hylton Gregory (H. Egbert Hill).—No information.

Rex Hardinge (Real name).—Still writing for the "new" *Sexton Blakes*. Lives on Dartmoor.

Arthur S. Hardy (Real name).  
—Died in the 1940 period.

Cecil Hayter (Real name).—Died in the late 1920's.

W. B. Home-Gall (Real name).  
—Died about 1936.

Stanton Hope (Real name).—Founded correspondence school in Australia some years ago, but now lives in England. Successful writer of many novels.

John Hunter, also Peter Meriton (A. J. Hunter).—Now lives in semi-retirement in Sussex; does occasional newspaper work.

(Part 2 Will Follow in an Early Issue)

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