

# THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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## Echoes of Three Famous Greyfriars Stories

**T**WELVE YEARS AGO, for *The Story Paper Collector* Number 30, we wrote a piece titled *Three Famous Greyfriars Stories*. It was prompted by the fact that we had, for the first time, had the opportunity to read copies of *The Boys' Friend Library* entitled *The Boy Without a Name*, *School and Sport*, and *Rivals and Chums*.

When we gave our opinion, short and sharp, of *School and Sport*, we overlooked the fact that we were judging it from the presumably more mature viewpoint of two score years and ten, not from that of a schoolboy.

We are, therefore, pleased to present the following comments by G. R. Samways, author of *School and Sport*, on that portion of the article. They are from a letter written by Mr. Samways to W. O. G. Lofts:

*The attacks upon School and Sport were justified up to a point. The story had no plot worthy of the*

*name, and was merely a succession of sporting events. But it must be remembered that the boys of that time were starved of sport; and despite its defects the story really did make a hit.*

*This was not, as the critic suggests, due to the impetus gained by the success of *The Boy Without a Name*. Had this been so, then the third story, *Rivals and Chums*, would have suffered as a result of the readers' disappointment with *School and Sport*. As it was, all three stories had phenomenal sales, each on its own merits.*

*You have only to look through *The Magnet* after 1915 to see how frequently *School and Sport* was sought after. Only two other stories were called for so persistently — *Bob Cherry's Barring-Out* and *A Very Gallant Gentleman*. So the yarn could not have been a flop (or Hinton would never have named his paper after it). It was written, moreover, not for pedantic adults, but for sport-hungry schoolboys!*

## FISHER T. FISH

I ENJOYED the article on Fisher T. Fish [in S.P.C. Number 73] by Roger Jenkins. The changes in Fishy's character over the years applied to a number of *Magnet* and *Gem* personalities, particularly Billy Bunter, Vernon-Smith, Bulstrode, Ernest Levison; and even Harry Wharton had to change his ways. In his case, however, he changed his ways pretty quickly.

I see nothing wrong in characters changing "before your very eyes." An author who prods, pushes, and moulds his heroes and villains into shapes less (or more) heroic and villainous, does so perhaps from the instinctive feeling that life is made up of numerous and ever-changing phases.

The man who has the same opinions as he did as a schoolboy just hasn't grown up. If Frank Richards became tougher on poor Fishy over the years, it was probably because children and schoolboys like to have their heroes and villains clear cut and in separate compartments, and Fishy fitted in very well as the schoolboy Shylock.

For mine own part, as one who read *The Magnet* during the First World War, the mystery was why an American citizen,

whose country was not then at war, continued to send his son to an English school, there to undergo the hardships of food rationing and periodic bombing by Zepps.

That this American citizen from "Noo Yark" saw no reason for withdrawing his young hopeful from Greyfriars was New York's loss and our gain.

By the way, not only characters changed over the years but names too. Fishy's "popper" may have been Vanderbilt K. Fish in the early stories, but somewhere along the line he became Hiram K. Fish.

I seem to remember some early illustrations of Fisher T. Fish minus his spectacles. Perhaps the scarcity of money and muggumps at Greyfriars made those horn-rimmed spectacles more than necessary over a period of three decades.

—MAURICE KUTNER

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THIS [S.P.C. Number 73] is a very interesting number, particularly Roger Jenkins' study of Fisher T. Fish, and Bill Lofts' revelations concerning the circulation of *The Magnet* and *The Gem*.

I believe that I have previously heard that the circulation of *The Magnet* was 250,000

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(Concluded on Page 342)

# The Story Paper Collector

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No. 74—Vol. 3

Priceless

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## THE RICHARD GOYNE---AND “PAUL RENIN”---STORY

By W. O. G. LOFTS

A LONDONER returning to his native city after an absence of many years would find vast changes in the most famous capital in the world. Many of its old buildings, standing for at least a hundred years, have now disappeared, and easily the most notable in recent years has been the almost complete extinction of the old Music Halls, which have been forced out of existence by the popularity of the modern craze for Television.

Patrons who used to visit the Music Halls weekly are now content to watch their “Goggle Boxes” from the comfort of their own fireside chairs, and being modern in my outlook in life, I cannot blame them. Television has come to stay, and the

days of the Music Halls are dead and buried in the past.

Older readers will still remember with nostalgia, however, such famous Music Hall stars as George Robey, Marie Lloyd, Harry Tate, Randolph Sutton, Harry Champion, and Vesta Tilley.

Harry Champion, complete with large watch chain, was best known for his rendering of that famous Cockney song *Any Old Iron, Any Old Iron*, and probably young Richard Goyne when a boy heard it more than most listeners, as the garden at the back of his house joined Harry Champion's, and he and Harry were very great friends.

On this note my story opens on the 1st of August, 1902, when Richard Goyne was born at

Edmonton, London. The son of a school teacher of Cornish stock, Goyme was most unfortunate to be born with his left leg half an inch shorter than its fellow, and deformed by infantile paralysis. It was only the unselfish devotion of his mother that saved his leg by massage, and she carried him from time to time to the Orthopaedic Hospital in Great Ormond Street for treatment.

Young Goyme was a prodigy who limped. Boys of his own age shunned him as a freak at school, where he used to exploit his literary ability by producing many magazines, which he wrote in pencil and sold for halfpenny a copy. His first published work was believed to have been at the tender age of eleven; it was a hymn accepted by the Editor of a missionary magazine. Goyme had great aspirations to become a missionary at one time, mainly due to the influence of his father who after thirty years as a school teacher took holy orders and became a vicar in Gloucestershire.

The Rev. Mr. Goyme was a most brilliant musician and won every award possible at the Royal College of Music. Not to be wondered at, young Goyme followed his father's footsteps in this direction, as he too studied at this famous college

and won many awards for his skilful playing of the organ and piano.

Upon leaving school Richard Goyme started work as a journalist on *The Hornsey Journal*, and at the same time studied in his spare hours as a student of musical criticism at Trinity College, London. He wrote a weekly column of notes, news, and comment, under the name of "Agitato" for the *Journal*, and also under this name he produced a long series of biographical sketches under the title of *Men I Have Met!* One of his greatest friends in this period was Reginald Salmon, a brilliant conjuror who belonged to the Inner Magic Circle in London.

LATER HE LEFT the *Journal* and went to *The Grocers' Journal*, but he soon left this and became a free-lance journalist. He bought a bundle of popular periodicals and studied all of them. A women's periodical, *Red Letter*, was offering payment for very short articles on anything of interest. Goyme was most disillusioned when he received a Postal Order for only seven shillings and sixpence for his first contribution, but he also had a very nice letter from Elsa Maxwell, the Editress, asking for more contributions. This bucked him up a great deal. For his first

week's work he earned a total of £1/11/6d., the second week £10, and his third week's work brought him the amazing total of twenty-five pounds! From that day he never looked back.

Receiving great encouragement from Miss Maxwell, Goyne was put in touch with David Grimmond, who was then running the boys' paper *Adventure* for D. C. Thomson, Ltd., and who was also conducting *The Dixon Hawke Library*, the Scottish equivalent of the famous *Sexton Blake Library*. He wrote a great deal for these two publications, and was paid the grand sum of £37/16/0 for writing a 36,000-word story featuring Dixon Hawke.

Later, he noticed in *The Daily Telegraph* an advertisement calling for the services of a journalist for a newly-formed syndicate newspaper feature service. This firm, which was run by the brothers Taylor and another man named Farncombe, aimed at syndicating serial stories, articles, and features to local, provincial, and other newspapers. What they wanted was a series of articles on spiritual fakes, which Goyne wrote for them with great success.

Later, Goyne submitted several short articles for inclusion in the *Union Jack Supplement*, which were accepted, and on the

strength of this he had several stories of Sexton Blake published in the famous *Union Jack*. H. W. Twyman, the Editor, can remember very little of Goyne, as he probably met him only once or twice.

WITH REGARD TO Richard Goyne's work for other Amalgamated Press publications I feel I can do no better than to quote his own words, taken from his Autobiography, *My Road to the Stars*:

*A companion put me in touch with an Amalgamated Press editor who ran a series of papers for boys and girls. I tried my hand at long complete stories for him, and he was most enthusiastic. "I want to buy the whole of your output, Goyne," he told me emphatically. For a time I turned out a most prodigious amount of work for his papers, and it seemed I could do no wrong. I made a great deal of money, and I made the fatal mistake of putting all my eggs in one basket. I romped along; and, socially, I virtually lived in Fleet Street. I joined the Press Club, and others less respectable; I became a "regular" at haunts such as the Cheshire Cheese; and still more satisfying, I was admitted to certain exclusive "schools" of editors, writers, and artists which were in those days invaluable to the free lance.*

*Then one unforgettable Friday*

afternoon, the dream ended abruptly. It was my habit to call at The Fleetway House, the headquarters of The Amalgamated Press, for a weekly cheque for my work. I expected to draw about eighty pounds, and I needed the money, because I had been living a rather hectic life that was certainly not within my income. I collected my cheque as usual, in a sealed envelope which I did not bother to open until I reached the station and found myself waiting for a train home. Then I discovered, to my horror, that the cheque was for twelve guineas. I rushed to telephone my editor. There had, of course, been a mistake. "I'm sorry, Goyne, I'm afraid not," he disillusioned me promptly. "I have had to turn down most of the work you have sent me this week, but . . ." My work had, in his opinion, suddenly and unaccountably "gone off."

My little run of success was over, for few free lance contributors succeed in making a "comeback" with editors who take a dislike to their work. It was no consolation to reflect that I had been warned to expect precisely this treatment from this particular editor sooner or later.

[NOTE: The papers Goyne refers to include *Champion* and *Triumph*, and although I have heard different versions of the affair from various editors in Fleet Street, I feel that Goyne's version should be told. Any

editor is quite at liberty to have published a denial or correction in *The Story Paper Collector*.—  
W. O. G. L.]

SHORTLY AFTERWARDS Goyne made great friends with Frank Anderson, a brother of a Director of The Amalgamated Press at the time. In turn he introduced Goyne to Alfred Mann, who presided over *The Violet Magazine* and other magazines including *The Girls' Friend* and *The Girls' Friend Library*. For several years Richard Goyne wrote practically all the stories which ran in these two papers. Sometimes his work occupied nearly all the issues under various pen-names, including "Evelyn Standish," the maiden name of his first wife.

In the early 1930's a set-back came to the periodical publishing world in the form of the new twopenny lending library scheme. Fewer people were buying the A. P. "Libraries" and the market for which Goyne was writing was greatly restricted.

Richard Goyne then gave up his journalistic career to become a full-time novelist, and commenced to write full-length stories for Stanley Paul and Co., Ltd., the well-known publishers, an association which was to continue with great success for over twenty years.

Apart from stories written under his own name, he also wrote under the nom-de-plume of "John Courage." It was about this time that he adopted yet another pen-name for use with his paper-backed novels, "Paul Renin," which in my opinion was easily the best known of all the names used by him for his stories.

These tales were of a highly romantic flavour, and enjoyed sales to the type of readers who revelled in this kind of literature. With their lurid covers—and they were indeed spicy!—these tales and the author's name were "household words" in England during the 1930-1950 period. Finding great success in this new sphere of writing, Richard Goyne was able to travel a great deal in Europe, and for a time lived in the south of France. It was here that he suffered a grievous loss, his ten-year-old son dying suddenly from heart failure, a fate which Goyne himself was to meet many years later.

**I**N 1939, at the outbreak of the Second World War and in spite of his lameness, Richard Goyne rather astonishingly succeeded in passing a medical board and enlisted in the Army. Later, he was drafted into the Commandoes, where because of

his keenness and high intelligence he soon rose in the ranks and was promoted sergeant. For a time he was confidential secretary to Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Lovat, D.S.O., M.C., the notable Commando leader, now Chief Scout. Many of Goyne's real-life experiences are to be found in his published books entitled *Destination Unknown* and *International Commando*, the latter novel dedicated to his former chief, Lord Lovat.

Collectors of *The Sexton Blake Library* can also read of some of his true-to-life experiences in Number 95, 3rd Series, entitled *The Case of Sergt. Bill Morden*, under the pen-name of "Richard Standish." Substitute the name of Richard Goyne for that of Bill Morden and, after reading this article, you will find the story remarkably true.

Discharged eventually from the Army as unfit for further service, he was undecided where to go. Tossing a coin to settle whether to go north or south, the result of the toss prompted him to travel north. Catching the night express from Euston, London, he arrived in Dumfries, Scotland. The hotels being full, he came back to Carlisle, saw an advertisement offering a furnished cottage, and rented it the next day. Slowly recovering in health, he began

to write again. Divorced from his first wife, Goyne had since remarried, and he received great help and encouragement from the second Mrs. Goyne, who also typed his manuscripts and proof-read his stories for him.

**A** WANDERER, moving from one part of the country to another, Richard Goyne at last settled down for a time at Penrith, in Cornwall, where, being an ex-service man, he became interested in The British Legion. As a voluntary service for the Legion, he persuaded the country branch to venture on the publication of *The Legion News*, which reached a circulation of over 5,000 copies. Amusingly enough, Goyne found that he had to write nearly all the contents himself, but that was no trouble to him, being a brilliant journalist. Altogether, nine issues were published, but when the wanderlust came on him again and he left Penrith for Scotland, that was the end of *The Legion News*.

Stories were still pouring from his pen, and he had more than

seventy bound books published, several of the later ones under yet another pen-name, that of "David Blair," until the morning of March 22nd, 1957.

Richard Goyne arose early, about 5 a.m., to finish a novel. He made himself a cup of tea, and when his wife went to see him at 8 a.m. she found him dead in his armchair, the cause of death being heart failure.

It can be said, then, that Goyne died in harness, and at the early age of 54, but he is certainly not forgotten. From all parts of the world collectors write to me, enquiring about and seeking copies of his novels, which is the finest tribute to a great writer.

In closing, I would like to express my grateful thanks to Mrs. Doris Goyne for most graciously granting me an interview and willingly giving me all the information I needed to write this article. I would also like to thank Derek Adley for first contacting Mrs. Goyne, enabling me to gather material to write this short Tribute to Richard Goyne and "Paul Renin."

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*I Wish to Obtain . . .*

—*The Story Paper Collector* Numbers 1 to 50.—Leon Stone, 131 Pretoria Parade, Hornsby, N.S.W., Australia.

## The Subject in Letters to the Editor is Article About Stories of St. Frank's

We have received a letter from Jim Cook commenting upon Berenice Thorne's article, *Babblings on Brooks*, in *The Story Paper Collector Number 72*. Omitting the salutation and thanks for S. P. C., the letter reads:

BEING A VERY ardent admirer of *The Nelson Lee Library* I naturally read first Berenice Thorne's *Babblings on Brooks*. I do not know this young lady but I know of her. Her father is a very keen Leeite and making herself available of his collection of *Nelson Lees* she has given us a somewhat dubious picture of St. Frank's and its characters. She has selected her favourite juniors, neglected many others and assumed some to be borrowed from other authors.

I defy her or anybody to create a character without that same character having a counterpart somewhere in the world of literature. Shape it as you will somewhere in the vast realm of fiction you will surely find a double. Brooks has never actually been acclaimed with an original boy or girl in his stories because this is impossible, but

what he has done is to draw such interesting images that these descriptions have remained in the mind of the reader sufficiently long enough to warrant giving the character "body." And I maintain this quality was very evident in Edwy Searles Brooks's portraiture of his St. Frank's boys.

About the relative merits of Charles Hamilton and E.S.B. it was of course inevitable that this age old and protracted dispute would arise. It always does when a post mortem is being held on *The Nelson Lee Library!* For the Lee baiter an added faculty is granted for finding discredit to spread where it should never be. How they arrive at these conclusions can only be ascribed to a morbid desire to kill off one thing at the expense of the other.

Miss Thorne expresses the opinion that Brooks's characterization of his individuals played a lesser role in relation to the suspense he built up around them. But E.S.B. was writing about many different people and if characterization suffered surely the neglect was necessary to maintain the sus-

pense! Or is the young lady really teaching the grandmother to suck eggs?

Miss Thorne finally cannot make up her mind whether "Mr. Brooks's writing had reached maturity, his stage was so crowded that one could not see the wood for the trees and the well-drawn characters were lost in the multitude of indifferent ones. Such was the tragedy of *The Nelson Lee Library*. Whether this deficiency was responsible for its inglorious demise . . ."

This statement rather pinpoints her inability to assess the esteem the old *Nelson Lee* is held in today. The fact that she acknowledges his well-drawn characters as such, then in the same line dismisses them to a multitude of indifferent ones doesn't hold ground.

It is a common occurrence today for the young to investigate the sanity of their elders. And we very seldom come up to their expectations. I don't mind that one bit. For very often indeed they are right off the mark and in the end it is us oldsters who usually put the youngsters on the right road. But when they start peeping into our favourite old books, and especially *The Nelson Lee Library*, and delivering a teenage sermon on its shortcomings then it is time

to rise up and speak.

—JIM COOK

Wembley, Middlesex, England.

*Anticipating that Miss Berenice Thorne would wish to reply to Jim Cook's letter, and considering that the completion of Volume 3 is very near, an exact copy of the letter was sent to her. Miss Thorne's reply, also shorn of the salutation and of her thanks for S. P. C. Number 73 and for the opportunity to reply to Mr. Cook, reads as follows:*

**D**UE, NO DOUBT, to my youth and inexperience, some of the deeper issues touched upon by Jim Cook escaped me. However, I will try to satisfy him on the more apparent points in question.

Mr. Cook resents the fact that I have "assumed" that Mr. Brooks borrowed many of his characters from other authors. I believe Mr. Brooks himself admitted that much of his inspiration came from the authors I named. At all events, there is no law against this form of plagiarism. Shakespeare borrowed ruthlessly from other authors. Few writers can create a character out of thin air. But there is far greater art in adapting the characteristics of living people and incorporating them into a well-knit personality than in merely lifting the ready made character of another author and adding a few embellish-

ments. It is a matter of opinion whether Coker is a better character than Handforth, but there is no doubt that Coker was the prototype.

Despite Mr. Cook's convictions, I made no conscious attempt in my article to contrast the works of Charles Hamilton and Edwy Searles Brooks, a theme that has become trite with repetition. I made reference to Mr. Hamilton on one or two occasions to illustrate an idea but my critic seems afflicted with the persecution complex that attacks many of his compatriots when Charles Hamilton is mentioned. He is taking arms against an imaginary foe.

One of the main points of contention seems to be that I, a member of the younger generation, should have the effrontery to criticize Mr. Brooks's writing. Pope, in his *Essay on Criticism*, did not restrict the privilege of fair comment to any one age group but rather to those who had

knowledge of the subject. Having made a study of *The Nelson Lee* for several years, I feel I have sufficient knowledge to criticize.

I have also an advantage that Mr. Cook lacks, more venerable in years though he is. My interest in Mr. Brooks's stories is recent and undistorted by the mists of time and nostalgia. No work of literature can be fairly assessed if judgement is coloured by sentimental memories of its past associations.

In my article I tried to keep my criticism objective: I gave credit where I believed credit was due and censured where I felt the subject merited it. Mr. Cook apparently belongs to that school of thought that resents both justified and unjustified criticism on principle. He might remember that when a work of art goes uncriticized, it all too often reflects its mediocrity rather than its perfection.

—BERENICE THORNE  
West Hill, Ontario, Canada.



## MEMORIES REVIVED!

READERS with fond memories of story papers of years gone by are having a good time. Tales from *The Bullseye* of the early 1930's are appearing in *Film Fun* and *Knockout*; and now,

starting with the very first of them, Rookwood stories from *The Boys' Friend* will run in *Knockout*. What a treat for today's young readers! (We are able to refer to these things here because this issue if so very late.)

## FISHER T. FISH

*(Continued from Page 332)*

copies a week at the peak period. What a colossal figure for a boys' paper!

At the risk of "sticking my neck out," I would hazard a guess that this was during the 1915-17 period, condemned by many collectors as being the time of "substitute" stories and the much-maligned editorship of J. N. Pentelow.

Roger's article brought back happy memories of stories featuring Fishy during the First World War. Of these, I think I enjoyed *The Punishment Policies* the most of all. I also remember the efforts of some of the substitute writers to "whitewash" Fishy after America entered the war in 1917.

I must say, though, that I always thought it a pity that Fisher T. Fish, being the only representative of the United States at Greyfriars, should have been such an unsympathetic character. Evidently the *Magnet* office was not concerned with the deleterious effect on Anglo-American relations!

—RON CROLLIE

**I Wish to Obtain . . .**

—S.P.C. Numbers 1 to 50.—Leon Stone, 131 Pretoria Parade,

Hornsby, New South Wales, Australia.

(Earlier this year, in the heat of the Australian summer, Leon Stone had the misfortune to lose by fire his home and his entire collection of books and papers. We have supplied him with copies of S.P.C. beginning at Number 51, but we do not have spare copies of earlier issues.)

IN THE SECOND COLUMN of page 338 of this issue, due to a typing error in the mss., the year of Richard Goyne's death is given as 1957. This should have read 1954.

\* \* \*

To "C. H. E."—As far as I know, the dearest book in the world is the "Marazin Bible," printed on vellum, and bought by Lord Ashburnham for £3,400. Everybody knows the cheapest book in the world. It is the *Union Jack*, published every Friday, 1/2d.—From *Union Jack No. 89, January 2nd, 1896.*

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