

# THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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## WHEN IN THE DARK . .

NO-ONE can accuse me of poetical inclinations. Indeed, I will go further and say that when I see a poem I usually shy away from it like a bronco from an unexpected tuft of grass waving in the prairie breezes.

This is not to say that I have never read any poetry. I have. Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*, for instance, and his *The Bells*. And I cannot resist a limerick. But it is not of ravens or bells or limericks that I am thinking at the moment. And of course a limerick really is not poetry.

Reading various kinds of literature, once in a while I have occasion to pause and wonder, when something a little different comes my way. One day something did; it appears to be very high class poetry. It has a solemn sound, seems to scan well, and rhymes very well indeed.

But what does it mean?

There is no use in asking the reader what it means without

giving him an opportunity to read the poem. Here it is:

*When in the dark, mysterious  
gloom of night,  
I sit beside my casement oft and  
gaze,  
And through the trees the glim-  
mering, pale moonlight,  
While in the court the silver  
fountain sprays;  
In other times, in other happier days,  
The past is dead and gone, nor  
will return.  
Oh, list—oh, list, the nightingale's  
sweet lays!  
The weary otter sleeps amid the  
fern;  
The night grows old, the stars all  
paler burn.*

Can anyone enlighten me as to what it means? Perhaps Martin Clifford can. The poem can be found in two issues of *The Gem Library*, the earlier one issued, probably, in 1907, while the second is dated December 26th, 1931, Number 1245, the

story being reprinted from the earlier issue.

Not having a copy, now, of either issue, I cannot be sure,

but I think the poem appeared as a contribution by one of the St. Jim's juniors to a lower school magazine. — W. H. G.

## Joseph Meechan Plans Printed Magazine

WORD COMES to us from Joseph Meechan, "The Mount," Kilsyth, nr. Glasgow, Scotland, that he is planning to commence issuing his "St. Gerald's" stories in a printed magazine. He wishes to hear from readers who'd like to subscribe to it (in order to determine the number of copies he would need to print), but for the present he does not ask for subscriptions. Mr. Meechan tells us that his magazine will have twenty or more pages of a size similar to, or slightly larger than, S. P. C. In addition to a "St. Gerald's" story each issue will contain other features.

### *I Wish to Obtain . . .*

—Numbers 28 to 32 of *The Story Paper Collector*. 18 assorted *Nelson Lee Libraries* offered in exchange.  
—George Mell, 49 Gracefield Gardens, Streatham, London, S. W. 16, England.

## A Billy Bunter "Gem"

WE READ THIS Billy Bunter "gem" somewhere, probably in *The Magnet*, and treasured it up for use. But we have forgotten just where it was found.

"You are too green for anything. The cows will be eating you if you are not careful," says Bunter. Bunter had heard that somewhere and treasured it up for use.

THIS IS from a story, *The Magic Coin*, about Wanda, the White Witch, in *Fun and Fiction* Number 118, January 10th, 1914:

The next instant she was gone — vanished as though she had dissolved into thin air. It was astounding.

It must have been!

\* \* \*

**Correction:** This issue, page 349, first paragraph: the name of the mysterious newspaper character should read "Lobby Ludd."

# The Greysfriars Jubilee Challenge Cup

THE GREYFRIARS Jubilee Challenge Cup was presented in 1958 by Leslie Rowley for competition between the Old Boys' Book Clubs to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the publishing of *The Magnet Library* Number 1 on February 8th, 1908.

The donor of the Cup first made contact with the London Club by finding some back numbers of *The Collectors' Digest* in the British Embassy in Tokyo, Japan. Since then he has been a member of the London Club and has attended the meetings held while he was on leave from his duties in the Consular service.

Winners of the Cup to date are: 1958, Birmingham Midland Club; 1959, London Club; 1960, Leeds Northern Club, the present holders.

Two eminent Hamiltonians have acted as Judges of the annual competition for the Cup, William H. Gander, of Transcona, Manitoba, Canada, and C. H. Chapman, of Caversham, Berkshire, England. Mr. Gander has an almost complete set of

*The Magnet*, while Mr. Chapman is the famous *Magnet* artist.

The only non-winning Club so far is the Merseyside Liverpool Club, and this is not because of not trying. They hope to win the 1961 competition.

The Golden Hours Club of Sydney, Australia, have not, because of distance, entered the competitions, but they may do so some day.

The photograph of the Cup was taken by Richard Hill, of Barking, Essex, England.

— B. G. WHITER

[A reproduction of the photograph appears on the next page, printed from a halftone cut made by The Western Engraving Bureau, Limited, St. James, Manitoba.]



## An Early Effort

WITH Sir Winston Churchill's 86th birthday anniversary being observed on November 30th, 1960, this seems to be a good time to draw attention to one of that great man's early literary efforts. It is a short story, *Man Overboard*; *An Episode of the Red Sea*, in Number 6 of *The Harmsworth Magazine*, January, 1899, by Winston Spencer Churchill. The Editor felt it was necessary to state that the author was not the American writer, Winston Churchill.



**The Greyfriars Jubilee Challenge Cup**  
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# The Story Paper Collector

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No. 75—Vol. 3

Priceless

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## JOHN NIX PENTELOW: A VINDICATION

By GEORGE RICHMOND SAMWAYS

WHAT MANNER OF MAN was John Nix Pentelow, who edited *The Magnet* and *The Gem* during the absence on active service of H. A. Hinton?

Several pen-portraits of Pentelow have appeared from time to time in collectors' magazines, and the personality which emerges from these portrayals is neither an attractive nor an authentic one. Whilst I am sure the authors of these articles wrote them in good faith, and were not actuated by malice, yet there is no doubt that they have been very unjust to Pentelow. They had not the advantage of knowing their subject personally, and much of their criticism is based upon misconception, and an imperfect knowledge of the facts.

One particular article on Pentelow, published seven years ago in *The Story Paper Collector*, has only recently come to my notice. Reading this article with pained bewilderment, I was quite unable to recognize the Pentelow I had known and worked with in the *Magnet* office. Some of the actions attributed to him are so completely out of character that the allegations would be laughable, were they not so damaging to the reputation of a good man. For of Pentelow's inherent goodness there can be no question. A man of principle and integrity, he would have scorned to stoop to such acts of baseness as those imputed to him.

PERHAPS THE GRAVEST charge against Pentelow is that on his succession to the editorship of the *Companion Papers*

he promptly proceeded to boycott Charles Hamilton, and to feather his own nest by writing all the stories himself.

The bare idea of a man so mild and amiable as John Nix Pentelow acting in this arbitrary and high-handed manner is ludicrous. I simply cannot envisage such a situation.

Let us consider the facts. Charles Hamilton, creator of the famous schools and characters, had been writing *Magnet* and *Gem* stories for eight years when Pentelow became editor, and the respect of The Amalgamated Press for Hamilton's talents and storycraft was enormous. The great publishing house—and especially Pentelow's controlling editor—would never have sanctioned the summary dismissal of one of its most esteemed and established authors.

I am sure there is not a vestige of truth in the story, which would never have gained credence but for one fact which appeared to give support to it—the fact that many of the *Magnet* and *Gem* stories which appeared during World War I were indeed written by Pentelow.

How did this come about? Not, I contend, through the rapacity of Pentelow, but for the simple reason that no Charles Hamilton stories were available at that time. Substitute writers

being with the forces, the editor had no recourse but to write the stories himself.

There had for some time been serious difficulties regarding the supply of *Magnet* and *Gem* stories. The outbreak of the 1914 war found Charles Hamilton stranded on the continent. No manuscripts came to hand from him, and the writer of this article (then a youth under military age) was pressed into service as a writer of substitute stories.

The position remained very unsatisfactory, so far as Hamilton manuscripts were concerned. They arrived so infrequently and so irregularly that the editor, H. A. Hinton, found life one big headache—a headache which he bequeathed in due course to his successor, J. N. Pentelow.

When Charles Hamilton eventually returned from the continent, it was only to migrate to Ireland, from whence his "copy" still arrived spasmodically. No doubt there were good war-time reasons for this, and Hamilton was not to blame; but the editor, in his desperate dilemma, had either to produce the stories himself or close down the papers. The explanation is as simple as that.

I yield to no one in my admiration and esteem for Charles Hamilton; but there is no reason,

because Hamilton is a great genius and Pentelow a comparatively obscure writer, why the latter's name should be sacrificed to the former's. In common justice to Pentelow's memory, I feel compelled to pen this vindication.

THE STORY by which Pentelow is best known today is *A Very Gallant Gentleman*—a *Magnet* story which brought him much merited honour, and much unmerited obloquy.

I have explained elsewhere how this story of the death of Arthur Courtney, of the Greyfriars Sixth, came to be written. Courtney was not, as some suppose, wantonly "killed off" by an irresponsible whim of Pentelow's, but in pursuance of a considered policy, of which Pentelow was merely the instrument.

It has been asserted by a critic that Pentelow boasted of the success of *A Very Gallant Gentleman*, claiming that it had elicited letters of praise from readers everywhere—more tributes, in fact, than any other *Magnet* story had received. If Pentelow really made this boast, he was but stating the plain truth. I saw hundreds of these eulogistic letters with my own eyes, and they continued to pour into the *Magnet* office long after the war was over and Pentelow had left the scene.

Whether Pentelow's famous story merited all the tributes lavished upon it must be a matter of personal opinion. In my own view, the story has perhaps been overpraised, but it is nevertheless a much better *Magnet* yarn than most, and one cannot be surprised at its perennial popularity.

IF, FROM HIS PLACE in the spheres, John Nix Pentelow is still cognisant of *Magnet* and *Gem* affairs, nothing can astonish him more than the great popularity of his Greyfriars and St Jim's *Galleries*, which have gained him unexpected renown, and which even his bitterest critics extol.

Pentelow himself had no high opinion of this feature, though he recognized its usefulness in making the characters seem living and real to the youthful readers.

ONE OF THE FINEST things Pentelow ever wrote, in my opinion, was a poetic tribute to a famous Surrey cricketer. The verses appeared, on the occasion of the cricketer's death, in *Cricket*, of which Pentelow and A. C. Maclaren were joint editors.

Pentelow was a great lover of cricket, and his knowledge of the game and its players was, like Sam Weller's knowledge of

London, extensive and peculiar. He himself was a sportsman in the truest sense of the term. Quiet and unassuming, gentle and courteous in his dealings with others, and inspired by the highest ideals of life and conduct, he lives in my memory as a fine and honourable English

gentleman. I could wish for an abler advocate than myself to defend his good name; but since I am one of the few now living who knew Pentelow personally, in day-to-day contact, the duty devolves upon me, and I trust I have discharged it fairly and faithfully. —G. R. SAMWAYS

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## THE BILLY BUNTER SAGA: “AN ABSURDITY”?

IT IS TRUE that sophistication comes earlier in modern conditions, but children as children really change very little from age to age. They are, however, extremely suggestible, and will readily shift their standards and demands when the chance occurs. What many timorous adults forget is that a writer, like a popular comedian, creates his audience; the audience adapts itself to the performer's idiosyncrasy. This by no means applies only at the highest imaginative levels. Dipping into the lower fictional waters, we may gaze for a moment at an absurdity such as the Billy Bunter saga. Monstrous as most non-addicts must find it, it is at least the author's personal conception, language and all; and to the hammering insistence of this it surely owes its success.

—From an article, *The Large Youthful Appetite for Magic and Phantasy*, in *The Times Literary Supplement* Number 3054, September 9th, 1960, *The British Imagination* section.

Come now, that is no way to talk about the Bunter saga! The only thing about it that might justifiably, and by a “non-addict,” be considered “absurd” is the lack of ageing on the part of all the characters. And what does that matter? Most of us would like to drink of the fountain of eternal youth (provided that good health and reasonable prosperity could be guaranteed), so why should we not experience it vicariously by reading about those who have imbibed of it?

# WHERE IS WILL GIBBONS?

By W. O. G. LOFTS

WHENEVER I SEE a small, chubby, and red-faced man, smoking a large cigar, looking in his early sixties, and with, probably, a cheeky grin on his face, I feel like a seeker after the mysterious newspaper character "Lobby Lubb" and going up to this person, but asking him "Are you Will Gibbons?"

Probably, with due modesty, I could claim to be highly successful in tracing former boys' fiction authors, many, indeed, of whom nothing had been seen or heard for over twenty years. I must confess, however, that in my search for Will Gibbons I have come up against a mystery which would tax even the detective powers of Sexton Blake!

Readers of *John o' London's* must have rubbed their eyes with astonishment recently when, on the *Question and Answer* page, I had inserted a request for information regarding the whereabouts of Will Gibbons, plus some data required about the authorship of the Red Circle school stories in *The Hotspur*. The latter information was supplied to me in full by D. C. Thomson, Ltd., but to my great

disappointment my query about Will Gibbons remained unanswered, though I had several letters giving me information that I already possessed.

The reader unfamiliar with the name of Will Gibbons may wonder why I am so anxious to trace this writer. The reason is that Gibbons is the last link in a chain of authors, all of whom have been successfully traced by myself during the last few years in my quest to get a full authentic list of writers of *Magnet* and *Gem* stories, of whom Will Gibbons is believed to be one. So until I have successfully traced this author, my records seem fated to be like Mr. Quelch's famous *History of Greyfriars*, which will always remain unfinished!

WILLIAM GIBBONS was born at 35, Oakwood Street, Manningham, Bradford, Yorkshire, on July 29th, 1900. His mother, Mrs. Frances Gibbons, was a teacher of music, and his father, also named William Gibbons, was described as a comedian, but here is another mystery. Although I have made exhaustive search through *The Stage* and other Variety newspapers

around that period, there is no mention of a William Gibbons. Either he was a very obscure comedian, or else he used a stage name. It was suggested to me by the Variety Artistes Association that William Gibbons was the real name of Jack Pleasants, a famous comedian of the early days, but there is no confirmation of this at the moment.

That the young Will Gibbons was an avid reader of *The Magnet* there is no doubt. Many older readers will remember the Greyfriars Story Competition which was launched in 1915 by H. A. Hinton in an attempt to find budding authors to write substitute stories for the Companion Papers. The lists of prize-winners published later included the name of Will Gibbons, living then at 7, Paisley Street, Bradford, so his entry must have been deemed of considerable literary merit.

It is quite possible that on the strength of his prize, Gibbons was able to obtain a position of office boy in W. H. Back's department at the then Amalgamated Press. Even today he is remembered quite well by former contributors and staff whom I have been in contact with recently. One of these, G. R. Samways, has this to say of Will Gibbons:

*He was, indeed, a very clever*

*writer of humorous stuff, and he did in fact deputise for me on a few occasions on my work for The Greyfriars Herald, etc. The only actual writings that I can recall to mind of his were some Herlock Sholmes yarns. Personally, I don't think he had any hand in the writing of the full-length yarns in The Magnet or The Gem, though he may have written some of the shorter original stories which appeared in The Penny Popular.*

At a later date Will Gibbons moved over to the department of R. T. Eves, who controlled such papers as *The Champion*, *The Triumph*, and most of the schoolgirl publications. About this time, I am told, he started to smoke his very large cigars, kindly bought for him by an editor who travelled on the continent a great deal. Amusing in his nature and talk—perhaps inherited from his comedian father—and very good-natured, there is no doubt that Will Gibbons was popular with all who came in contact with him.

**I**N THE LATE 'twenties Gibbons decided to start free-lancing and contributed many stories for the R. T. Eves department under his own name and that of "Dennis Cross," all of them of a humorous nature. Apart from this he also wrote for the girls' papers under the name of "Helen

Gibbons" and one or two other names as yet unknown to me.

With several stories appearing each week in these publications, it seemed that Gibbons was quite successful. But then for some unexplained reason he just dropped out of writing, shook the dust of Fleet Street from his heels, and disappeared into the blue. No editor or contributor has set eyes on him since.

Without close associates, unmarried, and living in lodgings in the suburbs where he often joked about his landlady, Will Gibbons was very much a lone wolf. Rumours have, of course, circulated as to what actually became of him, but these, given

below, have been thoroughly investigated by myself fruitlessly.

1. Fell on hard times and was living in a workhouse;

2. Was working for Thomas Walls & Son, ice cream vendors;

3. Joined a circus as a clown. (He certainly had the ability for this.)

IN CLOSING this unfinished article on *Where is Will Gibbons*, I would like to say that if any readers, especially those in the Bradford area of England, have any knowledge of his present whereabouts, I would be delighted to hear from them. Such information will be reported in a future issue of *The Story Paper Collector*.

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## Replies to Readers of *The B. O. P.*

From The Boy's Own Paper in 1904-5.

W. Henderson—1. Yes, it is harmful for boys of fifteen to smoke. 2. It spoils the appearance of the bat.

*Smoking does?*

Height (Allan)—No; we can't make you grow.

Charlie—Penny dreadfuls are being put down in America by the strong arm of the law.

Ferret (J. B.)—No cure. *Terse!*

R. Cherry—Particulars of the competitions are given in the first monthly part of each volume.

*This was before Bob swore allegiance to The Magnet Library.*

D. Evans—No, sir. Kentucky does not "remain in the same wild state as it did in the days of Daniel Boone"—very far from it.

# CALCROFT CAPERS

By MAURICE KUTNER

IN THE DAYS when an editor could tempt the juvenile pennies by declaring his periodical to be "an all-school-story paper" *The Marvel* was running stories of Jack, Sam, and Pete, by S. Clarke Hook, and Tom Sayers and the Boxing Ring, by Arthur S. Hardy. As each of these complete stories averaged seven pages, the readers were fed on a dish of stories which were short, but full of action.

The Tom Sayers stories were mainly concerned with the attempted faking of fights, or the injuring of one fighter or another, and kidnapping was also a part of the general scheme. The struggle for survival between rival promoters and gangs was fierce, the whole set-up being peopled by an element who had never even heard of the Marquis of Queensberry's rules. A shadowy Chinese here, a coloured boxer there, and even the fighting parson, had their place in this panorama of wickedness foiled and brought to naught by our cool boxer hero, Tom Sayers.

As a last resort the author could always re-hash the tale of the young, underweight, and im-

mature youth, with the love of the noble art in his blood, who would eventually fight and conclusively "whop" the experienced, gruesome, heavier-than-thou bruiser. The descriptive scenes in the various boxing halls carried the authentic atmosphere of shady (and noble) characters as seen through the floating haze of cigarette smoke.

These tales were given the adjective "grand," but the stories of Jack, Sam, and Pete were always called "rollicking," surely no misnomer, for here was fun indeed! Who could resist Pete's hearty, infectious laugh, his strength used only for the doing of good deeds, and the bland ease, almost childlike manner, in which he dealt with rascals of all types? Pete was a rollicking fellow indeed, in the true sense of the word—boisterously jovial and merry.

It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that when *The Marvel* ran the stories of Calcroft School, by Sidney Drew, at the close of the First World War, the readers had to be given "rollicking school tales" and that slogan was perpetually indicated on the green cover of

the paper. The stories for the first few months occupied only eight pages out of a total of sixteen, but the fashion and popularity of school tales, good or bad, meant the gradual dropping of Jack, Sam, and Pete, and Tom Sayers, and so the Calcroft tales were extended to fill the entire sixteen pages. *The Marvel* could then boast, for a while at any rate, the beatific state of being (for good or ill) "an all-school-story paper."

THE SCHOOL ITSELF was situated by Calcroft town, with the River Calder flowing close by. The school was divided into Houses which served the purpose of inter-house rivalries and japes, the most important of these Houses being Pycroft's.

The senior House-master, who also had the thankless task of teaching the Fourth form, was Mr. Pycroft, M.A.; tall and lean, he walked with a kind of jerky trot, and had a habit of exclaiming "Goo—oo—ood gracious!" when surprised, which was only too, too often. At the bottom of Mr. Pycroft's heart there was a well of tenderness that few of his pupils even suspected. This tenderness in his nature fitted in very well with the policy of the Headmaster, Dr. Halcart, to a certain extent. The Head did not believe in corporal punish-

ment as a means of discipline; a man surely before his time!

However, Mr. Pycroft possessed a rather grim sense of humour, and one method of keeping his turbulent form in order was to make the victim look ridiculous, plus a touch of humiliation. The occasions were rare when Mr. Pycroft was forced to test the flexibility of the cane. An occasion when both methods were used together was when one boy, blowing the tune, *The Last Rose of Summer*, on a penny whistle, followed by a few others, were made to trot round and round the square block of desks in an effort, as Mr. Pycroft said, to solve the mathematical problem of squaring the circle. The dolorous dirge, and peregrinations, were gradually speeded up to a kind of ragtime, the tempo being set by the tickling of Mr. Pycroft's cane. Perhaps a weak policy in the long run; but as these "punishments" caused grim satisfaction to Mr. Pycroft, and waves of laughter in the classroom (and presumably to the reader as well) the Editor was correct in his assessment of the term "rollicking."

The antics in the class-room were unfortunately often interrupted by the more serious business of education. On these occasions Mr. Pycroft would be accoutred with a pen behind

one ear, and a piece of chalk behind the other. When the lighter scenes of the class-room had run their course, he would bring the chuckling class to order with the words, "To your books, boys, and waste no more time!" What these books were was not clear, as very scanty information was given of the direction to which the youthful endeavours were aimed.

THE TALES CENTRED around the activities of the Fighting Four, which consisted of Lionel Fane, handsome and fair-haired; Bindley, good-natured, of unruly hair, and inclined to be careless in his dress; Manners, interested in "stinks"; and Pye, possessor of a clear singing voice. Only Fayne, apparently, was christened at birth, as there is no mention of any of the other three being blessed with a Christian name. This also applied to a number of other pupils.

This group was later joined by another, but the appellation, the Fighting Four, continued to be used. This addition was a Japanese youth, Moshara Ashayo Onasaki, slim, olive-skinned, with jet black hair and dazzling white teeth, and nicknamed Chabbs. His style of speech had a flowery flavour, interspersed with such "slang" expressions as cheatful guys for cads, while money was

referred to as coinery of the realm, boodle, or splosh, and the various scraps and fights that seemed to play such an important part at Calcroft were referred to as ear-biffery and neck-coshery. He was employed as chucker-out-in-chief by the rather suspect Fighting Four, suspect in the sense that, despite the legend of their great fighting abilities, too many others gave as good as they got for the legend to carry much weight.

Their chief rivals were Haik, Sargent, and Reffel, known as the Terrible Three. While Haik and Co. called our heroes the Funking Four, they in turn were referred to as the Terrified Three, but in neither case was the epithet justified.

The real "cheatful guy" of the Fourth form was snub-nosed Marmaduke Beilby, a crafty, wide-awake little rascal with a habit of always nosing about for, and driving, a hard bargain, very, very careful in money matters, and with a flair for ferreting secrets. To enlarge upon his excellent qualities: he never did anything for nothing and very little for sixpence!

There was a tale at this period concerning Beilby's unpatriotic activities as a food-hoarder. With the discovery of one of his secret hoards he was put on trial by his peers, the Fourth-formers of

Pycroft's, and after much legal jargon by counsel, fulminations against all and sundry by the accused, against a background of learned discussion 'twixt judge and jury, he was found guilty and sentenced to stand a form feed with the illegal hoard. The solemn edict proclaimed by the youthful authority went awry when the rival boys of Rickaby's House made one of their periodic raids and swiped the lot!

The actions of the Fighting Four were not always as honourable as one might have wished. When Bindley twisted Beilby's ear, forcing him to vote for Fane in the election for school captain, that was perhaps the proper caper; but when our four heroes bullied the worthy Beilby, and threatened to throw his watch out of the window in an effort to elicit information about a forthcoming jape by Haik and Co., one felt that the standard of honour and fair play at Calcroft did not always quite come up to the best traditions. This was an example of "touching pitch."

In some respects, however, Calcroft set a fine example to other schools. No one broke bounds on midnight excursions for the shallow excitements of cards and billiards, nor were playing-cards or pink sporting papers used by seniors or juniors

for the furtherance of their education or pleasures. Nor were any of the studies tainted by the smell of cigarette smoke.

PERHAPS the most likeable junior was Nathaniel Wilberforce Welby Stott, lean, long-legged, a face of many freckles, short-sighted and complete with spectacles. He wore tight-fitting trousers that barely came down to his ankles, a cap with ear-flaps that he always donned when there was a suspicion of frost in the air, and thick-soled gardening boots in which he clumped, or stumped, rather than walked.

He spoke in a most lofty style, and was an astronomer, naturalist, and botanist, his main interest being vegetables and their diseases. In 1918 the growing of garden produce for home consumption was a patriotic duty. Wilberforce did more than his fair share in this respect with goodness of heart and infinite patience. Perhaps such as he are the eccentrics of this world, but Wilberforce was not only a nice boy, but a true gentleman.

But we find our sinners more interesting than our saints, and Wilberforce was moved slightly away from the centre of the stage by the advent of his cousin, Waverley Ambrose Wilton Stott, his exact double in appearance,

whose main interests were aquariums and fresh-water molluscs. Waverley was not averse to money-borrowing from various juniors without disclosing the true state of his ability, or inability, to repay, and was not above tricking the knowledgeable Mr. Pycroft into believing that he (Waverley) had discovered a new snail—a pink planorbis, to be exact. While Wilberforce was gentleness itself, Waverley the Wily was made of sterner stuff. It is sufficient for us that Chabbs put Waverley in the category of “cheatful guy.”

**T**HERE WERE numerous other characters at Calcroft, chief of them being Mr. Chules, the drawing master and constant companion of Mr. Pycroft. Short and plump, with a husky voice, his hearing was a good deal better than his eyesight.

Mrs. Kinter, the housekeeper, owned the cat Cornelius, better known as the Calcroft nightingale, whose top note frequently roused Mr. Pycroft at midnight and set his teeth on edge and his hair on end. The Head's grand-daughter was pretty Rose Halcart, aged fourteen. Fair-haired and blue-eyed, she fluttered in and out of the stories like a second Cousin Ethel. She was a great friend of Bindley.

The prize fat boy of Rickaby's house was Bodder. He had more than his fair share of flesh, but there was plenty of muscle of the very best quality mixed with it, and he was a clever boxer with a terrific punch. Apparently his appetite and gastronomic accomplishments took second place.

The faithful guardian of Calcroft School was burly Constable Blagg, the terror of poachers and other evil-doers, and the most fearless of policemen. Much as he suffered at the hands of the juniors, Constable Blagg was not vindictive and, except for those occasions when the juniors were up to some of their japes, he looked upon the school as the one bright spot on his lonely beat. He was in possession of the key of the side gate, so he could admit himself at any hour and patrol the quadrangle and cloisters. There was usually some liquid refreshment left out for him on a certain window-sill by his friend the school porter.

Titles did not count for much at Calcroft. The Earl of Braysworth, a Fourth-former, was a pale, sandy-haired boy, and was rather delicate. He owned about sixty thousand acres of land and a castle, and other useful things like that, but at Calcroft he was just Bimble. Had he been a royal prince, instead of a mere belted

earl, his nose would have been pulled had he objected to his nickname.

THERE WAS a sufficient variety within the walls of the school for the author's use and intentions, but the personnel outside those walls enabled Sidney Drew to spotlight characters that were meat and drink to him. Jerry Diles was a red-headed gentleman and the proprietor of a bird-fancier's shop in Calcroft town. Ill-disposed whisperers held him responsible for the astonishing decrease in the number of wild rabbits, partridges, pheasants, and hares. A wily bird, indeed—too wily for Constable Blagg to put any salt on his tail.

The Mayor of the town was plump Mr. Bloomby, who looked like remaining in that lofty position if he lived another thousand years—monarch of all he surveyed.

Great men are doomed to be plagued by jealous-minded detractors, and such a one who felt the urge to supercede Mr. Bloomby as Mayor was tall, lean Alderman Whiffler, the local grocer. In and out of the council chambers torrents of threats and abuse passed between them, from one purple-faced and trembling-voiced protagonist to the other—and back again, often

performed to the delight of a surrounding ring of grinning Calcroftians.

Another delightful crew were Admiral Screwthamer, who resided at Calcroft Hall, and his two old sea-dogs of men-servants, Biffer and Cutter. The admiral was tremendously wealthy; whether wealth has any effect on impulses is debatable, but sure it was that the admiral was subject to frequent outbursts of temper which rendered the lives of Biffer and Cutter one long hurricane, broken by a few brief calms. However, he was a gallant, open-handed gentleman for all that, and fond of the boys of Calcroft, while his two men-servants adored him, albeit with an ever-watchful eye for the eternal rough seas and rocks ahead.

These gusts of temper on the admiral's part caused Biffer and Cutter to be sacked, on the spot, three or four times a day over a period of thirty years. This regular procedure had acclimated the old salts to the threats that the mutinous sons of guns would be keelhauled, given fifty thousand lashes, fed to the sharks, or packed off to the workhouse. To this extravagant tirade the sea-dogs were most philosophic in their ruminations—after all, east winds must blow betimes, so why repine? Belay and avast, this

was foul weather, but fair would follow!

Once the admiral was his jolly self again, the much-maligned mariners, having weathered the squall, carried on happily with their duties, making all sail while the wind was favourable, until the next tornado or hurricane hit Calcroft Hall.

With these adult and larger-than-life characters of the town

working in conjunction with the boisterous set of boys within the school, Sidney Drew was in his element and *The Marvel's* announcement of a rollicking school tale within its pages was not far removed from the truth. The jolly illustrations by Val Reading carried out the author's intentions and helped to create the atmosphere of Calcroft and its capers.

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## IN APPRECIATION OF S. P. C.

**I**N HIS "Appreciation" at the end Volume 1 of *The Story Paper Collector* H. R. C. says that it is a great pity that each one of our favourite story writers and artists, together with the publishing houses concerned, could not know of the mark their efforts left upon two or three generations. But how wrong he would be today!

Indeed, I have lost count of the number of people who have seen copies of *The Story Paper Collector* in recent years—people who were actively connected with the boyhood papers which still bring us untold delight and happy memories today. At the completion of Volume 3 I can think of no greater tribute than to quote some extracts from

letters received by me from editors, authors, and artists.

*I was most interested in seeing several copies of The Story Paper Collector. You see, I started work as junior sub-editor on The Magnet. It is certainly a very interesting publication.*

—R. T. EVES

Retired Director of The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., and former Editor of *The Champion*, *The Triumph*, *School Friend*, etc.

*What a splendid magazine this is. It brought back many happy memories of my editorial days at The Fleetway House.*

—H. W. TWYMAN

Editor of *The Union Jack*.

*I found the issues you kindly sent me most highly interesting; this little magazine is very well produced*

indeed.

—C. M. DOWN

Editor of *The Magnet* and *The Gem*.

*I look forward very much to any future issues of The Story Paper Collector that appear. The printing, presentation, and set-up are of the highest possible standard.*

—E. L. McKeag

Editor of *Schoolgirls' Picture Library* and creator of *Come Into the Office, Boys and Girls*, popular *Magnet* feature.

*The Story Paper Collector is a very well produced paper indeed, and I hope that it continues to be printed for many years to come.*

—W. HOWARD BAKER

Editor of *The Sexton Blake Library*.

*I say it, and I say it again! The Story Paper Collector is one of the most highly interesting little*

*magazines that I have ever read.*

—JOHN HUNTER

Author.

*This magazine is a work of art, and any editor would be proud to produce such a high class standard in any of his papers.*

—BASIL REYNOLDS

Artist.

I MOST SINCERELY hope that the above tributes will give Bill Gander the enthusiasm to carry on with *The Story Paper Collector* for yet another volume, and that it may be my happy task to write another Tribute to the pages of Number 100!

—W. O. G. LOFTS

[Please permit us to hide our blushes!—W.H.G.]

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## ON COMPLETING VOLUME 3

JUST AS the longest river at last finds its way to the sea, so does *The Story Paper Collector* at last find its way to the end of yet another volume—but it takes a lot longer. Which is a slightly roundabout way of saying that with this issue, Number 75, we have arrived at the conclusion of Volume 3, taking a full seven years to make the journey. This is a long time, but not quite as long as it took to travel through Volume 2.

Besides being the final number of a volume, Number 75 is somewhat special in a different way: it rounds out twenty years of more or less regular publishing. This is not an unparalleled accomplishment, but the list of privately-published amateur magazines that have survived for more than twenty years is not inordinately long.

For the information of those among our readers who are not hobby-printers and who may

wonder at the slowness of the trip, some day we may calculate, roughly, the number of letters to a page of text, multiply by the number of text-pages in a volume, and so arrive at the approximate number of individual pieces of type that have to be assembled—and later distributed into the type-cases again—in order that a volume may be completed. (We are not complaining—just explaining the delays.)

\* \* \*

FROM AUSTRALIA, edited and published by Syd Smyth (1 Brandon Street, Clovelly, N.S.W.), have come copies of Numbers 1 and 2 of *The Golden Hours Magazine* in very attractive covers. In Number 2 Syd presented, among others, articles by G. R. Samways on Magnet office affairs, and H. W. Twyman, one-time Editor of *The Union Jack*, on matters concerning that paper.

\* \* \*

PAGE 344a was already printed with the story of the Greyfriars Jubilee Cup when the result of the 1961 Competition (actually held in late 1960) was received from Ben Whiter. The winners were the Midland (Birmingham) Club, who will hold the Cup during 1961. This is the second time the members of the Midland Club have won the Competition. Congratulations!

\* \* \*

WE HOPE to get to work on the title/contents/index pages for Volume 3 in the near future, but not so near as to preclude the issuing of S. P. C. Number 76 first. For that number we have on hand a very informative contribution from W. O. G. Lofts. Mr. Lofts is a valued contributor: without his efforts our pages would often, in recent years, have had to be fewer.

—W.H.G.

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## The End of Volume 3

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