

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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Research on Modern "Comics"

THERE IS Buying Guidance on almost everything today and the "comic paper" is no exception. The boys of Form 2J at Wakefield Cathedral Secondary School in England have put the modern "comic" under the microscope. Their findings have been published in *Mitre*, the school magazine.

Five boys of thirteen years did the research out of school hours, and most thoroughly did they go to work. They nominated as the best comic one which they found not only best to read, but also the best for holding fish and chips, for fly-swatting, and for fire-lighting!

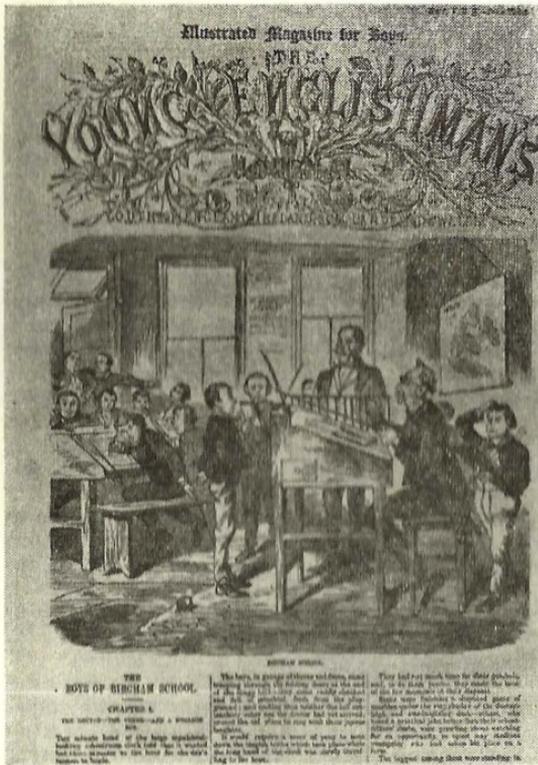
The winning comic—unfortunately the name is not given in the report—took 66 minutes, 38 seconds to read, against 9 minutes, 42 seconds for the "poorest buy."

In the fly-swatting test, the

investigators compared the number of beats of a comic on a window sill, before the paper became useless. One of the boys had the use of a fish and chip shop, where resistance to grease, salt, and vinegar was measured.

At first I thought that these tests were something entirely new, but on examining some of the old comics in my collection I see that these, too, have apparently been used for fly-swatting, and from the food-stains on some of them they have also been tested as table-cloths!

I still have in my possession a frantic letter from a postal member of the Northern Section [Old Boys' Book Club] library telling me that his wife had lit the fire with a *Magnet* from the Secret Society series. (It took two years to replace the copy.) Verily, there is nothing new under the sun! —GERRY ALLISON



The First School
Story in a Boys'
Weekly

The Young
Englishman's
Journal,
Number 8,
June 8th, 1867.
Temple Pub. Co.

The Boys of
Bircham School,
by
George Emmett,
Illustrated by
Harry Maguire
(Why did W. L.
Emmett accept a
title block with
reversed N's?)

(See S.P.C. 79, page 52)



IT WAS INTENDED that a reproduction of a Victorian paper should accompany three of the four parts of Tom Hopper-ton's article, *Digging Round the Roots*. However, having placed the copies of the papers in the hands of a photog-rapher, Mr. Hopperton had difficulty in obtaining the prints and they only became available in time for this issue.

DIGGING ROUND THE ROOTS

By TOM HOPPERTON

THE TOTAL NUMBER of stories was now becoming formidable, although only Talbot Baines Reed's contributions to *The Boy's Own Paper* — *The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's* and *The Cock House at Felsgarth* — have weathered the storms of time. Their impact was cumulative rather than immediate. Harcourt Burrage long outwrote and outsold Reed, and if he had happened to be backed by The Religious Tract Society instead of more ephemeral publishers, I feel that he would not have been submerged in unjustified obscurity. He began with Emmett and lived long enough to be adopted as a sort of pet by Hamilton Edwards in *The Boys' Realm*, but from *Charley and Tim at Scarem School* in his early days down to *The Lambs of Littlecote* and *The Island School*, which seems to have been the Aldine Company's swan-song in number publishing, it is hardly possible to go wrong in dipping into his vast output.

Book publishers were still chary of the school story. When

Sampson, Low & Co. were publishing Henty's *Union Jack* they had only one school tale in the 70-odd books they issued. The R. T.S. for a long time confined themselves to Reed's works, and when Sampson, Low had another go at the juvenile market in 1892 with *Boys* their book list had risen to over 100 with Reed's *Roger Ingleton Minor* still standing alone. More representative for our purpose were the two firms reprinting weekly serials, Hogarth House with five school stories out of 54, and Edwin J. Brett, whose 1900 list had 21 of them to 22 historical tales and 45 general adventure yarns.

With the turn of the century, the climb began. One reason must have been the improvement in the stories. There is not a lot to choose between, say, the first *Boys of England* serial, *Alone in the Pirate's Lair*, and Henry St. John's *In Nelson's Day*, and it would be difficult to date such stories accurately from the internal evidence. This would not apply in general to

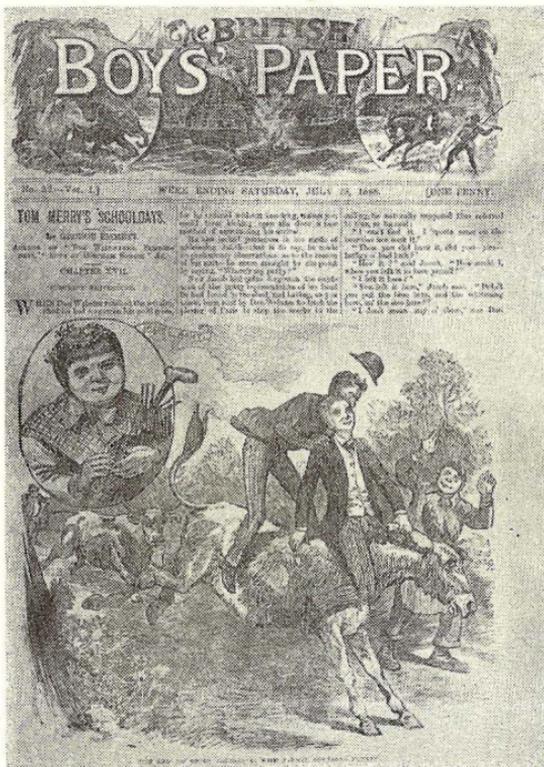
the school story. There were naturally exceptions. *The King of the School* has been mentioned as capable of passing muster for many more years: at the other extreme, Horace Phillips' *Cast Out by the School* was poor hammy stuff which might well have been written twenty-five years before it was. But speaking broadly, there was a quite disproportionate improvement in the polish of the school story over a similar period, and no one could confuse the dates of *The Boys of Bircham School* and Goodwin's *Cad of St. Corton's* (1895 and utilising a scholarship boy).

THIS ADDED GLOSS of sophistication must have swelled the popularity, but was there another factor, something in the minds of the boys themselves? The youngster of 1867 did not need to be told that life is real, life is earnest. His short schooling and the imminence of some sort of job made the boarding school a vague dream, remote and unattainable. The popularity of Rags to Riches fables probably reflected his immediate interests. The better-educated boy of the opening years of the twentieth century was held back longer from the labour market by the increased school-leaving age. Did

he feel sufficiently close to St. Basil's and the rest to consider himself a possible and not incongruous entrant and so begin the process of personal association which led thousands upon thousands to enrol themselves as devoted supernumeraries at St. Jim's and Greyfriars? It seems to be at least feasible.

For precisely the same reason that the boys' thoughts were being moulded in this direction, the publishing opportunities were then broadening beyond the recognition of the pioneers, and the last foundation stone was laid by the striking expansion of The Amalgamated Press.

The Harmsworths founded what became The Amalgamated Press just as the full effect of the 1871 Education Act was being felt. The population was expanding rapidly and illiteracy reducing to a negligible percentage, so that the greatest mass market ever lapped up their proliferating publications. Up to then, a writer specialising in school stories had been unthinkable: it was practically impossible, in fact, for even the most versatile to confine himself exclusively to boys' papers if he hoped to make a living. The purely boys' writer now became a fact, and if people like Michael Storm, Henry St. John, and David Goodwin continued to accept



Tom Merry at
the Helm

*The British Boys'
Paper,*
Number 22,
July 28th, 1888.
Aldine

Tom Merry's
Schooldays,
by
George Emmett

(It doesn't show
in the reproduc-
tion, but the heel
of the page bears
the legend: "New
Boys' Paper, No.
96, Vol. II, *The
British Boys' Paper,*
No. 22, Vol. I")

(See S.P.C. 79, page
52, where it is called
British Boys' Journal)

adult work it was perhaps more
from choice than from necessity.

Even so, the school story spe-
cialist of any output could not
have developed without another
change, this time in the weeklies
themselves. They had been
mixed papers right from the days

of Beeton's *Boys' Own Journal*, and
Boys of England set a formula for
its rivals and successors which
was still adhered to by the A.P.'s
highly successful *Boys' Friend*,
Boys' Realm, and *Boys' Herald*.
This make-up relied on three,
four, or five serials to form the

body of the paper, and was inevitably a brake on the progress of the school tale. The editors, fearful of unbalancing their programme, would not at best admit more than one at a time, so the schoolboy remained a piccolo drowned by the trumpets, trombones, and bass drums of highwaymen, pirates, and adventurers. The libraries altered all this.

PENNY LIBRARIES had flourished from about 1840 and, as they were complete, undated, and always vendible, they were probably a better publishing risk than the perishable weekly journal. Brett, Charles Fox, Hogarth House, and even that crow of ill omen Guy Rayner had run long and successful series, which still, however, remained strings of unconnected novelettes. The new type issued by the A.P. and particularly by the Aldine Publishing Company showed it was possible to build up a devoted following for characters as diverse as Buffalo Bill, Deadwood Dick, Dick Turpin, Robin Hood, Sexton Blake, and Jack, Sam, and Pete. For the first time sustained characters were outdrawing the triple pull of the names of author, publisher, and paper.

The stage was set, although not even the stage manager, Editor Percy Griffith, was aware

of it. *The Gem Library* was conceived as a mixed weekly and as such gave no indication that it could have outlasted Trapps-Holmes' *Vanguard Library* or Henderson's *Nuggets*. Tom Merry was to be an intermittent performer and (said he sinking his voice to a whisper) there was nothing extraordinary about the Clavering stories and the bud certainly did not foreshadow the flower. What *did* make *The Gem* was Griffiths' decision to transport the Terrible Three to St. Jim's, a removal effected against the author's inclination and one which was to give the stories a unique structure. Chance created the opportunity, and Charles Hamilton was pre-eminently the author to make the most of it.

No writer can do more than continue where his predecessors left off. The limited terrain of the school story had been so extensively cultivated that no denigration of Charles Hamilton's work is implied in pointing out that his material was very much second-hand and that he was deeply rooted in the Victorian tradition. As that is the present object, this is not the place to detail what he *did* contribute, even if the editorial space and particularly the editorial patience permitted it.

One example, however, may



Magnet
 Readers may
 Not Recognise
 Him, but the
 Young Gentle-
 man in the
 Plug Hat is
 Bob Cherry

Boys of England,
 Number 86,
 July 10th, 1868.
 Newsagents'
 Publishing Co.

Unlucky Bob;
 or, *Our Boys at*
School,
 by
 W. T. Townsend
 (See S.P.C. 80, page 76)

not be amiss as rounding off the picture, and there is no need to take it from one of the widely admired series. The Christopher Clarence Carboy Magnets would be well down the list in any popularity poll but, better than most, they show

how the writer's later artistry can change a well-worn and unpromising theme.

Carboy came to Greyfriars as the world's greatest practical joker. (The Editor said so, and I suppose he knew.) A shiver runs down one's back at the

thought of what Hemyng and his school would have hung on such a peg. C. C. C. would have lived and breathed and had his being in a miasma of booby traps, ink squirts, stink bombs, bent pins, exploding pipes and candles, trip cords, greased staircases, peppered tea, liberated rats—and blackbeetles!

It is therefore at first sight surprising to find that "the greatest" did very little japing at Greyfriars—not a single hand's-turn more than was essential to carrying on the plot. Instead of a tedious procession of rather spiteful tricks, we had a sequence of character studies showing how the familiar cast reacted to Carboyan stimulation. Among these delightful vignettes we saw Mr. Quelch insisting with ferocious irony that Carboy's assumed obtuseness was really feeble-mindedness and compelling him to write to his father to be removed to a suitable

institution, Wharton being needed into mounting his well-known high horse, and Skinner, Fisher T. Fish, and Bunter responding in their own way to a "planted" news item that Carboy Senior was a millionaire.

THE VICTORIANS plotted their stories from incident. Mr. Hamilton switched the process and the casts which he lovingly elaborated over the years were used to evolve a system of plotting from character. Cox's Orange Pippins were developed from the original crab-apple—and there is no point in elaborating the point.

Granted, it may be urged that no other writer had the opportunity to work on so grand a scale, but in return it must be granted that the opportunity would never have existed at all if he had not been the master craftsman of the school story.

BUNTER BEDS!

WHEN WE FIRST SAW the entry *Bunter Beds* as we were consulting our *Concise Universal Encyclopedia*, issued in weekly parts a generation ago by The Amalgamated Press, we had a momentary vision of beds

in which Billy Bunter had slept, each one labelled: *Billy Bunter Slept Here!* But that couldn't really be, so we read on:

Red Sandstones and Pebble beds of from 1,000 ft. to 2,000 ft. in thickness . . . in Devonshire and more particularly in the Midlands.

So now we know!

TRACING A LEGEND

By JACK OVERHILL

I USED TO GO IN an old shoemaker's shop a lot when I was a boy. On the wall was a picture of a man on a black horse leaping a gate. The man wore a funny-shaped hat, a mask, and a black cloak. He had pistols stuck in his belt and he was looking round, a smile on his lips, at other men on horseback after him. One day I asked the shoemaker who he was. He stopped work and smiled.

"That's Dick Turpin, riding on Black Bess, the Bow Street Runners after him."

"Did they catch him?"

"No. Dick was too fly for them."

His manner showed whose side he was on. So did the tales he told me of Dick Turpin holding up coaches and robbing the rich to give to the poor. One of the tales—how Dick Turpin accidentally shot and killed his friend, Tom King—grieved me deeply. Little by little, the picture of a brave and gallant man was built up in my mind to take its place with two other heroes—

Robin Hood and Hereward the Wake—the three forming a trinity symbolizing the noble and heroic.

As time passed I heard about Dick Turpin from other sources. Everything I heard added to his stature. When I was ten or eleven I read of his exploits in penny copies of *The Aldine Library*. I wished I had been with him to rob rich merchants, play pranks on stout aldermen, carouse in wayside inns, exchange sword thrusts and pistol shots with Bow Street Runners, and ride hard on a stout horse that took toll-gates in its stride.

One day I came across Harrison Ainsworth's *Rookwood*, the book that immortalized Dick Turpin and his ride to York on Black Bess. It was the climax of all that I had heard and read about the famous highwayman. I thought he deserved a statue as high as Nelson's in Trafalgar Square.

I don't know how I learned that Dick Turpin was born at the *Rose and Crown* public house in

Broadcast on the East Anglian Programme of
the Midland Home Service, June 8th, 1959

Hempstead, a village about 20 miles from Cambridge. When I did, I biked there with my brother—he was a bit older than me—to have a look at it. One of the rooms had a spy-hole in the oak-beamed ceiling and round the walls were framed prints—some of them coloured—and extracts from old newspapers that told of Dick Turpin's exploits. There was also a framed copy of the entry of his birth, in Latin, in the parish register.

Opposite, across the road leading up to the church, was a group of pollard willows called Turpin's Ring. This used to be a cockfighting pit. There was an air of antiquity and romance about the *Rose and Crown* in keeping with its traditions and all that had its effects on us. On the way home my brother got so excited that he kept lashing his bike with his cap, calling it Black Bess and imploring it to go faster as he pedalled hard to escape from the Bow Street Runners on his track.

IT WAS A PITY that I had to learn the truth. The day came when I did. And how different from fact was fancy!

Born in 1703, Dick Turpin was apprenticed to a butcher in Whitechapel. Soon afterwards he set up in business on his own

and married. His way of doing business was simple: he took cattle without paying for it. He got found out—rumour said he stole a herd, but that was an exaggeration—and he bolted. For a time he robbed smugglers in Essex, but they were rough stuff, able to give as good as they got, and afraid of what they would do if they caught him he took to deer-stealing, highway robbery, and house-breaking.

He became one of a band that made their headquarters in Epping Forest, living in caves. They robbed churches and lonely farmhouses. Turpin used to hold men and women over the fire to make them tell him where they had hidden their money. Other acts of his are too bad to mention. The gang was broken up and Turpin joined up with others, notably Tom King. The brutalities of him and his associates kept the suburbs of London for a while in terror.

Turpin didn't do his famous ride to York. That was probably done by Nick Nevison, sixty years before Turpin's time. The story goes that Nevison was recognized when holding up a man at Gads Hill at four o'clock one morning. He rode the two hundred miles to York in a day to establish an alibi. When he got there he changed his clothes and boots and walked on to the

bowling-green where he asked the mayor the time. The mayor looked at his watch and told him it was a quarter to eight.

Nevison was prosecuted for the robbery but on this evidence he was acquitted. The jury didn't think it possible that a man could be in two places so far apart on the same day. When he was drunk Nevison bragged about what he had done. King Charles got him to confess the truth to him privately. He pardoned Nevison and called him "Swift Nick."

The ride from London to York was long regarded as a real test of horsemanship and if there is any doubt about this story there is no doubt about John Lepton making a wager that he would ride between London and York six times on successive days—three times each way—completing each journey before sunset. He started out on May 20th, 1606, and won the wager. That was over one hundred years before Dick Turpin who, as I say, didn't do his famous ride to York. Neither did Turpin have a horse named Black Bess. Horace Smith in a poem and Harrison Ainsworth in his novel, *Rookwood*, made that name up between them.

Turpin didn't accidentally shoot and kill Tom King. It was Matthew King—probably a

brother of Tom King—that was shot in the yard of *The Red Lion* in Whitechapel Road. Turpin died gamely: he stamped his foot down to stop his leg trembling when he was hanged in York for horse stealing. But he hadn't the courage of some highwaymen.

CAPTAIN HIND and Robert Allen had the nerve to attack Oliver Cromwell in his carriage when it was guarded by seven men. Francis Jackson and four other highwaymen, after a running fight all day, finally stood at bay and fought for an hour with swords and pistols against two hundred men arrayed against them on Hampstead Heath. John Cottingham—known as "Mulled Sack" as he drank so much of it—and Tom Cheney robbed Colonel Hewson on Hounslow Heath in sight of his own regiment, Cheney losing his life over it.

In comparison with them, Dick Turpin was a nobody. He made so little impression on the mind of Captain Charles Johnson that he didn't even mention him in his *General History of Highwaymen*, published only three years after Turpin was hanged.

Turpin's fame was built up by hundreds of ballads, plays, and stories written about him. One of the stories—a penny dreadful called *Black Bess*; or, *The Knight*

of the Road, written by Edward Viles in the 1860s, ran in weekly parts for five years. The total number of words was something like two and a half millions.

DURING THE PAST few years a number of books have been published revealing the truth about Turpin. Wondering how his fame was standing up to it, I recently went to the *Rose and Crown* at Hempstead to find out.

The old public house with a painting on the wall outside of a coach hold-up looked as picturesque as ever. Its genial host, Mr. Handley, was pleased to talk about Dick Turpin. He did so in an interesting manner. He showed one of the latest books about him—one I hadn't read—and a number of letters he had received from school-children saying how they had enjoyed visiting his house. As for grown-ups—they came thicker than ever.

Mr. Handley said: "In one week I had visitors from Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. As for the Americans—they're always coming to look round!"

So it seems that it is impossible to tarnish Dick Turpin's good name. He is not now just a national hero—he is an international one! +

Bill Martin

IT IS WITH regret that we record the death in October, 1962, in London of William Martin, known to collectors as a very efficient locator of copies of old boys' papers that otherwise would have been lost to collecting circles.

Of Mr. Martin W. O. G. Lofts writes:

I always got on very well with him—in his case his bark was far worse than his bite.

In my own collecting I owe a lot to him, and above all for introducing me to Herbert Leckenby, which started me on my hobby activities. It would be fair to say that if it had not been for Bill Martin, W. O. G. Lofts may not ever have been heard of in the Old Boys' Book Club.

Gruff and abrupt, but very reasonable when you got to know him and a real Cockney, Mr. Martin left a complete bound collection of Magnets and Gems, a huge lot of "bloods," and goodness knows what else.

We had wondered as to the reason for there being no more of Mr. Martin's full-page advertisements in *The Collectors' Digest*. Without doubt it was his health that was the cause of their non-appearance. +

THE HARDY BOYS MYSTERY STORIES

By ALVIN FICK

PERHAPS IT IS no mere coincidence that the words "boy" and "fun" both contain three letters. The two are, and ought to be, inseparable. This element of fun has been pursued by the young reader into the realm of books, accounting for the long-standing popularity of certain series of books and literary characters which have stood the test of time.

When considering British boys' books and fictional characters one's thoughts inevitably rest on the boys at Greyfriars and, in turn, on the inimitable William George Bunter, variously referred to as Billy, "that fat villain," or, as Harry Wharton, Captain of the Remove, has been heard to say, "that fat, frabjous, footling octopus."

In the United States the popularity of the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories is perhaps something of a parallel, having been maintained more than thirty years. The stories are still being published, *i. e.*, reprinted, with some new ones occasionally printed. Around the Christmas season

they seem to be available in all kinds of stores. Although these stories are, as indicated above, primarily mysteries (the two principal characters are Frank and Joe Hardy, sons of a professional detective), they contain much material relating to the boys' activities in school.

Solving mysteries and being involved in the exciting events surrounding their investigations were not the only occupations of the Hardy boys and their friends. There was also a generous portion of good-natured practical joking among their high school friends.

OF THE 38 titles published in the Hardy Boys series no doubt hundreds of thousands of copies have been printed, perhaps even millions of these books finding their way into American homes. At the local public library the Hardy books are among the most worn and thumbed.

It is interesting to note that the Hardy Boys also have a principal character who appears often, although he is not destined to attain the formidable (!) importance of Bunter, bane of the Famous Five.

Chet Morton, described as "a stout chubby boy of about sixteen," usually was a prime mover

in the elaborate hoaxes which spice the stories. Sometimes he ends up on the receiving end, to the obvious enjoyment of his companions. One of his most notable successes in the field of fun-making occurs in *The Secret of the Old Mill* (copyright 1927). Chapter 14, *Con Riley Guards a Package*, is devoted to a joke played on one of Bayport's sterling police officers. The chapter begins quietly, but ends in a wild, laugh-provoking climax:

Officer Con Riley was at peace with the world. His heart was full of contentment and his stomach was full of pie. The sun was shining and one of the aldermen had just given him a fairly good cigar. His beat had been free of crime for a week. His wife had gone to the country for a visit and had taken the children with her. Hence, Con Riley's feeling of deep and everlasting satisfaction with the world. Even the boys, his natural and hereditary enemies, had not tormented him for several days. Perhaps, he argued, it was because they were up to their ears in work, preparing for examinations. If that was the reason, Con Riley decided that examinations were good things and should be encouraged.

That this state of tranquility would soon be ruptured is a foregone conclusion. An encounter with his "natural and

hereditary enemies," which begins on a mutual note of amity, admiration, and pseudo-friendly regard, develops into a booby-trap for the unsuspecting police officer. The chapter comes to a close with Riley running down the street carrying a package containing a loudly-clanging alarm clock. He is followed by a crowd of small boys who are nearly as amused as the perpetrators of the trick, Chet Morton and the older lads, who are watching from across the street.

THE AUTHOR, Franklin W. Nixon, sprinkled these happy episodes generously throughout his books, perhaps to lighten the tenseness of the main mystery plot. Even the most pleasant shade of a tree is improved and its enjoyment heightened when dappled with flecks of sunshine. At any rate, the humor is a bonus never frowned upon by the young reader—or by the "old boy" delving into an old haunt for a whiff of that magic that suffused his youth.

Here is a list of the 38 Hardy Boys mystery books:

- The Tower Treasure.
- The House on the Cliff.
- The Secret of the Old Mill.
- The Missing Chums.
- Hunting for Hidden Gold.
- The Shore Road Mystery.

The Mystery of the Caves.
 The Secret of Cabin Island.
 The Great Airport Mystery.
 What Happened at Midnight.
 While the Clock Ticked.
 Footprints Under the Window.
 The Mark on the Door.
 The Hidden Harbor Mystery.
 The Sinister Sign Post.
 A Figure in Hiding.
 The Secret Warning.
 The Twisted Claw.
 The Disappearing Floor.
 The Mystery of the Flying
 Express.
 The Clue of the Broken Blade.
 The Flickering Torch Mystery.
 The Melted Coins.
 The Short-Wave Mystery.
 The Secret Panel.
 The Phantom Freighter.
 The Secret of the Crooked
 Arrow.
 The Secret of the Lost Tunnel.
 The Secret of Skull Mountain.
 The Secret of Wildcat Swamp.
 The Wailing Siren Mystery.
 The Crisscross Shadow.
 The Yellow Feather Mystery.
 The Hooded Hawk Mystery.
 The Clue in the Embers.
 The Secret of Pirates' Hill.
 The Ghost at Skeleton Rock.
 The Mystery at Devil's Paw.



 ¶ DELICATE (B. O. P. Reader) —
 What you complain of does not
 signify. — *Reply to a reader in Boy's*
Own Paper No. 1389, Aug. 26, '05.

TODD = FOX

IN NEWSPAPERS in North Amer-
 ica there appears a syndicated
 feature, *Is This Your Name?*
 It gives, each day, a name and
 what it means and whence it
 came. In December last the
 name dealt with was "Todd."
 We were told that it is an Eng-
 lish name meaning "one with
 some qualities of a fox" or "a
 dweller at the sign of the fox."

From this it is seen that the
 author of the *Inn of a Thousand*
Secrets stories in *The Bullseye* in
 the early 1930s had a good idea
 when he named his hostelry *The*
Red Fox Inn—the name of the
 sinister landlord who dropped
 so many of his visitors into the
 cellar with the aid of a revolving
 chair being—Jasper Todd!

— — —

I Wish to Purchase . . .

— Copies of British weekly maga-
 zine, *Passing Show*, from October
 7th, 1933, to February 3rd, 1934,
 and other issues containing illus-
 trations by Fortunino Matania.
 Will pay well.—Alvin Fick, Fort
 Johnson, New York, U.S.A.

— Copies of *The Gem* with J. N.
 Pentelow's *St. Jim's Gallery*, and
 also No. 593.—Frank McSavage,
 21231 Celes Street, Woodlands
 Hills, California, U.S.A.

Mainly in larger servings we present . . .

MORE POT-POURRI

A PRINCE WHO VANISHED!

A FANTASTIC, FICTITIOUS prince was responsible for my introduction to *The Magnet*. When I was six or seven years old my parents decided it was time I had some weekly reading.

The name of the publication they chose for me I cannot recall now—it was early in 1914—but I clearly remember the main character. He was Prince Pippin.

The paper was well illustrated and had similar size pages to those of *The Sexton Blake Library*. I never became really keen on Prince Pippin, but a friend of mine, a year or so older, became very enthusiastic about him.

An older brother of his was buying *The Magnet*. He offered to swap this paper for my Prince Pippin publication. It was not long before Prince Pippin was replaced by *The Magnet* at first hand. I just could not wait to get a delayed, and often damaged, copy.

I have an impression that Prince Pippin did not survive World War I. Perhaps some reader of *The Story Paper Collector*

can enlighten me. Prince Pippin lived in my memory, and that is all.

I fancy very few other collectors of old story papers bother with Prince Pippin, for his exploits were just too fanciful. But someone might recall the name of the paper in which he was featured. —O. W. WADHAM
12 Military Road, Lower Hutt,
New Zealand.

[There is an article, *What is Gossamer?* —*Fairy Queens and All That*, by Otto Maurer, in the 1961 *Collectors' Digest Annual*. Other articles in earlier *Annuals* also tell of the stories which featured Prince Pippin.]

* * *

Film Fun Finishes!

STILL ANOTHER LINK with the days of 1919-20 when many new boys' papers were coming from The Fleetway House was cut last September when (as was briefly noted in S.P.C. Number 81) *Film Fun* was merged with *Buster*. Perhaps it was the last link, as far as juvenile weeklies are concerned—if we do not include *Children's Newspaper*.

Number 1 of *Film Fun* was dated January 17th, 1920, while the final issue was for week ending September 8th, 1962, but the

total number of issues we do not know.

The pictured humorous adventures of movie and TV star Tony Hancock was our favorite feature of all the picture-stories that have appeared in *Film Fun* while we were reading it.

In recent years the paper became noted, with *Knockout*, for the reprinting of stories from papers of the 1920s and 1930s, but this policy was abandoned before the end and *Film Fun* had become an all-picture-story paper.

—W. H. G.

* * *

The Wax-Ender

I FOUND *Bend Over, Bunter!* in S. P. C. Number 80 interesting reading, but in the school that I attended we had no alcove at the end of a corridor where the cane was kept. It always hung from the master's desk for all to see, so there was no excuse for not thinking of what was waiting for you if you did anything you shouldn't do.

The cane had some black twine wound round the end, which I learned later was called cobbler's wax. It looked rather ominous and certainly made those who felt it writhe like cut worms! Sometimes their contortions were funny!

Then one day, not thinking about it, I was caught talking

and, silly-like, denied it, but was proved guilty by another boy. It was my turn to receive the wax-ender on both hands—and how it stung! I tried hard not to weep but my eyes filled up!

But as time went on I was glad that I received the punishment. I had felt a desire to know what it was like when I had witnessed others being punished. The pain didn't last long, but the cane certainly made one behave, and it is a pity that it isn't made more use of today!

In the few school stories that I have read, only once have I seen the cane mentioned as a "wax-ender." This was in a *Big Budget* of June, 1907. The story, titled *Too Much Bragley* was written by Herbert Wentworth. I shouldn't wonder if he had made the acquaintance of the cane when he was a lad, to judge by the way he told of its stinging cuts!

—ARTHUR HARRIS

Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno,
Wales.

* * *

Too Much War!

WAR, WAR, WAR! I'm sick of it, and so are all the fellows I know here! But British boys must be war minded, otherwise why so many war comics and strips? 34 monthly war libraries,

16 comics (age group 8 to 14)
with war stories per week!

—JOHN C. STOKES

Dublin, Eire. November 26th, 1962.

* * *

Jasper Todd's Return

ONLY NOW, after 21 years in the New Zealand Army, have I found time to catch up on memories of the comics and boys' papers of my long lost youth. Through the kindness of the Editor I have been able to recapture much from a file of about thirty copies of *The Story Paper Collector*.

There is too much to dwell and comment upon in all these information-packed pages, but one page in Number 57 prompts comment. It carries a reproduction of the front cover of *The Bullseye* for October 22nd, 1932. The picture shows Jasper Todd, the rascally landlord of the Red Fox Inn, and the chair that dumped his victims into a hidden cellar.

Surely this is not the same Jasper Todd who appeared in a *Chips* serial, *The Red Inn*, about the time of World War I?

He, too, had a chair—a real death chair. When he touched a secret spring, the victims went to their doom in the sea below.

Well can I recall the rhyme that Todd used to chant:

*I love it, I love it,
And who shall dare
To chide me for loving
That old armchair.*

Apparently *The Bullseye* tried to hit the target with revived and re-written stories originally printed in other papers years before. —O. W. WADHAM

* * *

No-One Claimed C. H. Wrote in Simple Style!

Recently I challenged a suggestion that Charles Hamilton wrote in a simple style. The writer of the suggestion did not mean "Simple" he meant "simple"—but the impression that the average reader of the comment would gain is that Charles Hamilton wrote for less intelligent youngsters.

—Comment in *Let's Be Controversial in The Collectors' Digest* for November, 1962, referring to an item, *The Group Picture*, in *The Story Paper Collector* Number 79.

I do think, however, that Charles Hamilton was the better writer for youngsters, he having a more simple style.

—Opinion expressed in S.P.C. No. 79.

SIMPLE: Not complex or complicated.

—A definition according to the Funk & Wagnalls *Practical Standard Dictionary*.

IT WILL BE NOTED that the view expressed in S. P. C. Number 79 was that Charles Hamilton wrote

in a more simple style than J. N. Pentelow, NOT that he wrote in a simple style. There is a difference.

We are now wondering if we rate as more, or less, average than the average reader!

However we may rate, we would have hoped that the "average" reader of S.P.C., being without doubt one who reads a lot, would possess the ability to choose the right definition of the word "simple," the one that we now know was intended by the writer of the comment.

Certainly we did not for a moment feel that E. B. F. was suggesting that Mr. Hamilton wrote in a simple style or by inference that he wrote for less intelligent youngsters.

**

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE is not an ideal medium in which to conduct discussions and we prefer to avoid them. That being so, we will do little more than quote from two readers who wrote to us on the matter, but only after it was given publicity in *The Collectors' Digest*. No-one took sufficient offense to write to us about it when the item appeared in *The Story Paper Collector* Number 79.

**

With regard to "simple": I go along with your thoughts here.

E. B. F. only means, very sensibly and to my mind correctly, that given the two authors and the same plot, Charles Hamilton would tell the story to the enjoyment of the youngsters and the oldsters; whereas J. N. Pentelow would be more likely to attract the oldsters, mainly by reason of his style; which would, no doubt, make use of more complicated words and phrases that, say, the ten-year-olds hadn't become too, if at all, familiar with. I would say that C. H. was by far the MORE TALENTED writer, able to reach an audience or readership of immense proportions — WHICH HE DID. But J. N. P. was a talented author, too, more subtle, less direct, possibly, no, undoubtedly more long-winded. He made Mr. Hamilton's characters a year or two older in actions all round, I think — and tended, though, of course, not always with success (depended on the reader) to make one THINK.

— C. F. F. RICKARD

North Vancouver, B.C.

*

I see [in the October C. D.] that you are skirmishing on the fringes of the "Who was the Greatest?" battle. I would agree with your memories of Pentelow. He gives the impression that he aims at an exuberant piling up of detail, a la Charles Dickens, but he somehow manages to give a remarkably involved appearance to his paragraphs. "Simple" is a word with an unfortunate secondary meaning:

perhaps if E. B. F. had used "pellucid" [it] would have saved misunderstanding.

—TOM HOPPERTON

Scarborough, Yorks.

**

PERHAPS E. B. F., who (along with us by our extracting those paragraphs from a letter without asking for permission) so innocently started the whole ruckus, is a bit dismayed at it all.

**

WE HAVE just had a very bright thought. It would have been still brighter if it had occurred to us before we had set more than three columns of type. (We cannot—naturally—bring ourself to waste all that time and effort by discarding it unused.) This is it: We give our permission to anyone who does not like the phrase, *a more simple style*, in S.P.C. Number 79, page 50, to substitute for it: *a less complex style*.

That should make everyone happy—we know that E. B. F. will not mind—and we hope to hear nothing more about that SIMPLE word.

—W. H. G.

* * *

Dixon—Not Nixon!

WE THOUGHT we had read the proofs of Alvin Fick's article in this issue, *The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories*, very carefully, but it now appears that we couldn't have.

On page 126, column 2, line 17, for Nixon please read Dixon.

Sorry, Al!

* * *

Cards Appreciated

OUR THANKS go out to the many friends who sent us Christmas cards. We would like to thank each one individually—but we cannot do that!

* * *

John o' London's

WELCOMED BACK more than three years ago, the literary magazine *John o' London's* bowed out as a separate publication at the end of 1962. It is now a section of *Time and Tide*.

* * *

The Greyfriars List

CONGRATULATIONS to John Wernham, Roger Jenkins, and all concerned for the fine printed Old Boys' Book Club (London) Library Greyfriars List. The pictures make it a real collectors' item.

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