

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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Amateur Journalism: School Magazine

I ENJOYED the article on John Nix Pentelow and amateur magazines [S. P. C. Number 86]. In the dark recesses of my bookcase are some very precious examples of Amateur Journalism, certainly precious to me as far as one's schooldays can have any value. To wit: various numbers of my old school magazine from the first World War period.

The magazine was amateur in content but not in execution: sixteen professionally-printed pages for the vast sum of one halfpenny, published three times a year at the end of term, and financed mainly by the Old Boys' Club.

Our school contained a girls' section in separate buildings on the other side of the tuck shop, which accounts for such items in the magazine as *Net-Ball*. The title-page, designed by the art master, depicted boys and girls in various useful occupations, over the motto *No Day Without Something Done*.

The boys were shown at the firing range, swimming, at the smithy's anvil, and at carpentry, while the girls, befitting their lower station in life as mere providers of comforts to the superior male, were shown in the processes of ironing linen and cooking what looks like jam tarts.

I have sometimes wondered why the art master confined himself to these occupations as our school was divided into two sections, Commercial and Industrial.

Letters from head-teachers, news from the classes, football, cricket, and swimming reports — not forgetting net-ball — and amateur literary efforts, mostly poetry, filled the major part of this well-produced and printed magazine, but space was found for a sombre and ever-growing Roll of Honour and numerous war relief funds to which we subscribed our halfpennies and farthings.

There were also selections of

genuine schoolboy—and school-girl—howlers; for example, *Syrup is what a man puts his foot in before getting on a horse.*

As in all well-run publications, the Editor dealt with letters from his readers. Such is the immodesty of youth that a proportion of his answers consoled the would-be author or poet whose literary efforts had not been thought fit to be given the dignity of print.

No bookcase filled with well-bound classics can stir the memory as can these beloved pages of fifty years ago. There are the names of masters and pupils which recall scenes, nicknames, pranks, and the seemingly ever-sunshiny days of a young and hopeful world.

—MAURICE KUTNER

“Dixon Hawke”:

Prisoner-of-War Guard

DURING the second World War, at Colditz Castle, the famous prisoner-of-war camp in Germany, one of the more astute of the German guards was nicknamed after the famous detective of the Thomson boys' papers, Dixon Hawke. Obviously this was done by someone who had been a keen devotee of the Dixon Hawke adventures.

The guard was known by this name and no other by all the English-speaking prisoners who passed through the camp. This “Dixon Hawke” was not a cruel man, but he was a relentless one with a keen sense of duty and full well knew that it was his job to detect escape attempts day and night.

Readers of the Thomson boys' papers remember Dixon Hawke with nostalgia, but several hundred old soldiers will remember the German “Dixon Hawke”—without any nostalgia—for the rest of their lives.

—ALBERT WATKIN

I Would Appreciate information to assist me obtain a complete set of *Famous Fights*.—Tom Langley, 57 Sandgate Rd., Hall Green, Birmingham 28, England.

THE MAGNET

Needed to complete set: Nos. 163, 217, 263; and good ones to replace my poor copies of 1 to 6, 90, 100, 110, 207, 308, 668, 942.

Wm. H. Gander

202 Yale Ave. W., Transcona 25,
Manitoba, Canada.

FAVOURABLE COMMENT ON COMICS OF LONG AGO

SOME OF the readers of *The Weekly News*, published in New Zealand, read with special interest an article in the issue for April 22nd, 1964. Titled *Reading Without Fears*, it began by telling of the writer's having come upon some comic papers:

While turning over some old books and magazines recently, I came across several English comics of the years 1938-40, which I had read as a child.

In those days I never heard of comics or any other kind of reading material for children being banned. I don't even remember hearing the word . . . and no wonder.

Papers for young people were interesting and amusing, and parents had no reason to object to their children reading them. In fact, we read them over and over again.

The writer refers to two of the comics by name: *Crackers*, of which she writes, *I enjoyed reading "Crackers,"* and *Rainbow*: *The comic that I liked better than any other was "Rainbow,"* and the picture story I liked best of all in it was *"Chums of the Sea."*

In this, two children, with their uncle, travel the high seas in a submarine searching for an island where they hope to find long lost treasure.

Because of the war and a shortage of paper, all comics in England ceased publication . . . and so I was left in suspense as to whether or not Jim and the two merry children did find their treasure island.

That is what she wrote. Actually only some of the comics ceased publication because of the paper-shortage and *Rainbow* was not one of them. The writer continues:

However, a year or two ago I came across a copy of "Rainbow" of the 1960s. The paper was the same size as it was before the war, and "Chums of the Sea" was still running with Jim and the children still searching for their treasure island.

This is one comic that parents should buy for their children.

That is very good advice, if only it could be followed. But *Rainbow* eventually did cease publication, in 1956. "J. W. R.,"

who wrote the article in *The Weekly News*, must have written about the later issues of *Rainbow* from memory, and her memory proved unreliable.

The remaining paragraphs of the article are concerned with the suitability of today's comics for children, concluding with the thought that if publishers put out more comics and other reading matter similar to that of 30 years ago, there would be less need to put any on the banned list today.

We do not know just which comics magazines are on the banned list in New Zealand. In Canada, no crime comics are allowed—not even Dick Tracy, although his adventures can be followed in the daily newspapers because the doses of crime are ladled out in small lots. The worst of the horror comics are not, we understand, published any more in the U.S.A., and most of the comics publishers there adhere to a "comics code."

THE ARTICLE from which we have quoted came to the attention of several collectors in New Zealand. A spell of writing letters to the Editor followed, and there was some wondering as to whether "J. W. R."

would be willing to part her comics.

In a later issue of *The Weekly News* there is a letter from Geoff Harrison who, referring to *Rainbow* and the advice to parents to buy it for their children, wrote: *That would indeed be very difficult to do. "The Rainbow" began a long and successful reign in 1914. It ceased publication in 1956 and is now a much-prized collectors' item.*

*

IT WAS learned later that the writer of the article, "J. W. R.," had copies of several of the old comics, and some of them have passed into the hands of collectors.

The thought then came, perhaps others had comics or story papers which they would be willing to sell. Advertisements were placed in a magazine and as a result there were brought to light and acquired by collectors nearly two hundred copies of *The Gem*, *The Magnet*, and *The Popular*, 250 copies of *Film Fun*, and some *Nelson Lees*.

This suggests that, whether or not there was gold on the treasure island in the story, there surely may still be treasures in people's attics! — W. H. G.
June 5th. 1963.



THE THRILLER WAS GREAT VALUE FOR TWOPENCE!

By ALBERT WATKIN

IN THE THIRD issue of *The Thriller* (February 23rd, 1929) a reader, H. W. of Surbiton, wrote the Editor: "How do you do it for twopence? I am a 'thriller' enthusiast, but hitherto have had to pay anything from two shillings upwards in indulging my taste. Now I have my fill of thrills for twopence weekly. It's wonderful." It is extremely likely that many readers wrote to the Editor in this strain, but he never explained "how he did it."

Now, in 1964, as I browse through my collection of this paper I can think of no better sentiment than H. W.'s. It would be exactly what I would write, were it possible, to the ghost of a paper long dead.

Apparently expense did not mean anything in the early days of *The Thriller* for in Number 7 the readers were informed that the story in that issue was a last-minute substitution and that regardless of cost incurred by the re-arrangement, necessitating the holding up of printing machines and rush work for all concerned, everything had been

put aside in order to get another Edgar Wallace story into the hands of readers at the earliest possible date. This gave the paper its third Edgar Wallace story in seven issues.

The Thriller commenced publication on February 9th, 1929, with *Red Aces*, a Mr. J. G. Reeder story by Edgar Wallace who was then in his prime and undoubtedly the greatest crime writer of the day. This was followed by *Lynch Law* (Hugh Clevely), then back to Edgar Wallace and *Kennedy the Con. Man*.

Then came an unheard-of author, Leslie Charteris, with *The Story of a Dead Man*. The Editor assured readers that this author was a past-master with the pen and was going to be talked about a lot during the coming years. Inspector Teal appeared in this first story along with Jimmy Traill, but the Saint had yet to burst upon the lovers of crime fiction. He was not long in coming.

Soon a reader wrote in suggesting that a Leslie Charteris serial be run, then this popular writer could be read every week. To which the Editor aptly replied that "too much of a good

thing was not good for anyone," so *The Thriller* never got its serial, though Leslie Charteris made many appearances.

After the paper had been running for a year it ran a story-writing contest which seemed to be a success. *Yellow Menace* by Murdoch Duncan was adjudged the winning entry and was published in *Thriller* Number 80. This was Duncan's first attempt at writing a story and it brought him £100 and opened the door to further success, for he became a regular contributor. He described his main pleasures in life as reading *The Thriller* and playing Rugby football.

The Editor was unable to separate the second and third entries so bracketed them and generously paid £50 each. In *Thriller* Number 83 appeared *The Forger* by Fenton Robins, who also went on to write further stories for the paper. Number 89 presented *The Crook of Soho* by another beginner, William P. Vickery, who later joined the long list of Sexton Blake authors.

Many of the Blake authors wrote for *The Thriller*—perhaps it could be said the best of them did: G. H. Teed, Gwyn Evans, J. G. Brandon, Courtts Brisbane, L. C. Douthwaite, Rex Hardinge, Anthony Skene, John Hunter, Ladbroke Black, Pierre Quiroule, Warwick Jardine, and others,

including Stacey Blake who died in 1964.

As to the rest, their names are legion and it is certain that no other magazine in the crime field had such a line-up. Following Wallace and Charteris there were Sydney Horler, Edmund Snell, David Hume, Maxwell Grant, Francis Gerard, Douglas Newton, Hugh Clevely, David Whitelaw, Roy Vickers, George Harmon Coxe, and among many more Edwy Searles Brooks, who had stories under his own name as well as "Berkeley Gray" and "Victor Gunn." Barry Perowne wrote twelve stories featuring the well-known character A. J. Raffles, and several other stories.

THE THRILLER finished with dramatic suddenness on May 18th, 1940, at Number 589. In this issue readers were urged to place their orders or be in early for Number 590, *One Man Blitzkreig* by Berkeley Gray, but readers are still waiting for it—or are they? Jack Wood in his "Nelson Lee Column" in *The Collectors' Digest* has suggested that the story was subsequently issued under the title *Six Feet of Dynamite*. If it was, readers most certainly paid a lot more than twopence for it.

¶ THE YEAR as printed at the foot of column 2, page 262 of this issue should read "1964."

JOSEPH PARKS AND VANITY FAIR VOLUME ONE

THE HOBBY of Amateur Journalism, of which *The Story Paper Collector* is an example, has a history that goes back two hundred years or more. At one time there was some discussion as to whether *The Student*; or, *The Oxford Monthly Miscellany* could be considered an amateur journal, but opinion favoured its being accepted as such. This publication first appeared on 31st January [of 1750] from Oxford, Almon Horton states in Chapter Two of *The Hobby of Amateur Journalism*.

We are not, however, concerned here with such early examples of Amateur Journalism but with just one latter-day example. It is Joseph Parks' *Vanity Fair*, which later became well-known to story paper collectors under the title of *The Collector's Miscellany*.

It was in 1917 that I became acquainted with Joseph Parks, who lived at Saltburn-by-the-Sea, in Yorkshire. He had recently been invalided from the Army and had renewed his interest in A. J., in which he had been active before enlisting. Joe printed Volume 1, Number 1 of *Vanity Fair* in that year, it being dated for June.

Joe readily admitted that the early issues of his magazine were not admirable examples of printing. But they are examples of what can be accomplished with the crudest equipment, for they were printed on a wooden home-made printing press. That is just what they look like.

NUMBER 1 of *Vanity Fair* consists of eight pages, with a supplementary leaf carrying a reproduction of a photograph of Joseph Parks. The page size, when bound and trimmed too closely, is $4\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Untrimmed, the pages would be a little smaller than those of *The Story Paper Collector*. The printing improved as the volume progressed: the wooden printing press had been replaced by a real one.

There are twelve issues in Volume 1, a total of 156 pages plus covers on some issues. Volume 1 ends with the issue for March of 1919, and the contents are mainly of Amateur Journalism interest. There are, however, two articles on old boys' books: *Old Boys' Periodicals* (about *The Boys' Herald*, a monthly magazine, 1877-78), and *Origin and Development of Boys'*

Periodicals (covering the years 1817-68). Another article is titled *The Juvenile Theatre; or, A Penny Plain & Twopence Coloured*. All three were by Frank Jay.

Among the small advertisements there are some, including those of Mr. Parks, listing *The Boys' Friend*, *The Magnet*, *The Gem*, and other papers wanted and for sale.

A letter dated September 23rd, 1942, explains how I happen to have Volume 1 of *Vanity Fair: Thanks for another "S.P.C." which I really do enjoy. It revives many pleasant memories. I question if you ever had a complete set of the first series of "V.F./C.M."* I had

enquired about the possibility of acquiring copies of the earliest issues. The letter continues: *Here are my own copies, which I hope will reach you safely.*—JOE

They did.

STARTING at Number 13, for September, 1919 (but with the year printed "1918" in error), *Vanity Fair* was enlarged to about 5x8 inches. Number 13 is labeled "Vol. 1" but is included in Volume 2. In it I am listed as having renewed my membership in The International Amateur Press Club. On page 8 there is a Notice: *After this issue "Vanity*

(Concluded on Page 267)

Number 1 of *Vanity Fair*

THE FOLLOWING eight pages comprise a type-set reprint of *Vanity Fair* Number 1, June, 1917. It gives only a general impression of the magazine's appearance, because there is at The Rookwood Press not one single piece of type, ornament, or rule which is similar to those used by Joseph Parks, apart from the hairline rule on page 1 and elsewhere.

An attempt was made, however, to reproduce Mr. Parks' idiosyncrasies as a printer at that time, including the spacing and

some of the typographical errors. The presswork is, unavoidably, better than in the original.

It is very likely that when he was printing the first issue of *Vanity Fair* Mr. Parks was making his first attempt at printing. Perhaps he had picked up a job lot of old type and decorators and stock cuts, or it may be that they were being thrown out by a friendly printer. Some of the display type used in later issues of Volume 1 were, even in 1918, definitely old-fashioned, fancy-designed Victorian styles.



VOL. 1. NO. 1. JUNE, 1917.



Vanity Fair.



An Amateur Magazine

PRINTER AND PUBLISHER



JOSEPH PARKS,
38, GARNET STREET,
SALTBRUN - BY - THE - SEA.
YOKRSHIRE.



Reprinted in May, 1964, by Wm. H. Gander at The Rookwood Press, Transcona, Manitoba, as a supplement to *The Story Paper Collector* Number 89, January, 1965.



Notice.



We have great pleasure in placing before you, the first number of this little magazine. We regret the numerous errors and the shocking bad printing. But in future issues we hope to overcome these difficulties.

We are greatly in need of short stories and articles, under a 1,000 words. All correspondence to be addressed to: JOSEPH PARKS, 38, GARNET STREET, SALT BURN - BY - THE - SEA. YORKSHIRE. This magazine will be published bi-monthly.

Our Mutual Friend

A MANUSCRIPT MAGAZINE.

PARTICULARS FROM: MRS LUCY PARKES,
3, MAVIS BANK, PRESTON. BRIGHTON.



Dawn On The East Coast.

BY JOSEPH PARKS.

The first streaks of dawn appera in the East, casting a yellow gleam upon the glittering sea. Slowly deepens, tinting the sky with red and throwing into bold relief the rugged white cliffs.

Out at sea a dirty old coasting steamer is walling her way towards the mouth of the distant river. The air is crisp and cold, but bracing.

Slowly the yellow tint in the East deepens into gold, and casts its radiance upon the heaving water, turning it into a mass of glittering fire.

The silence is intense, broken only by the dull boom



on the surf upon the sandy beach. Slowly and ever slowly the light increases, and the ball of gold in the East appears to rend itself apart from its firey prison and to cast it asunder. It is dawn.

With the coming of the dawn, the cliffs echo and re-echo to the screaming of numerous gulls.

Away on the silvery beach where the tide is racing and surging, a couple of intrepid bathers have arrived, who are hastily casting off their garments, preparatory to doing battle with the pounding surf. A few fishermen are now upon the beach, loading up their cobbles with fishing tackle, ropes and ballast, and over-hauling their sails and running gear for the days toil. One of the men has already launched his little craft, and with the short white lugsail filling out to the puffs of wind that are springing up from the west; is heading out to sea. A string of long-necked cormorants are winging their way towards the East.

The sun has attained more power now, and its alluring influence has enticed several nurse-maids and sundry small children upon the golden sands.

A DAUGHTER OF THE LAND.



On this page in the original edition there is a reproduction of a line drawing: in the foreground, a milkmaid with a pail, a cow, a milking stool, and grass; behind them, a field; in the distance are a cottage and some trees.



A stiff breeze is blowing up from the West, capping the dark green waves with dots of white.

By this, all the fishermen have launched their boats, and are now mere specks of white upon the horizon, making towards the distant fishing grounds.

A few hours later and the sands will be teeming with life and gaiety, and echoing to the laughter of countless merry children.



'The Little Budget.'

AN AMATEUR MAGAZINE.

SPECIMEN COPY 3D POST FREE.

FROM..... MISS MARGARET TRAFFORD,
15, EGERTON GARDENS,
LONDON, S. W.



A LITTLE WORD:**---WHAT IT CAN DO.**

It was only a little word spoken by a boy-
But 't sank deep into a heart and took away its joy.

It was only a little word, 'twas said unawares-
But 't gave hope t'a yearning heart - and took away its fears.

It was only a little word, gentle soft and sweet-
But 't comforted a broken heart-'t made new joydells beat.

It was only a little word, but 'twas full of love-
And a man's hard heart,-bare, hard as stone, was forced to move.

It was only a little word, but it ceal'd a fate:-
A little word of true love is n'er spoken to late.

MARGARET TRAFFORD.





Amateur Flashes.



THE LITTLE BUDGET. We have received No's 1 and 2 of this magazine, which is one of the best amateur publications that we have seen for many years.

The literary tone of this magazine is excellent.

THE POSTSCRIPT. Unfortunately this really artistic magazine consists of only one issue. But we hope that in the near future MR ROOSMALE-COCQ will favour us with many more such issues. MR COCQ by the way, is also contributing a series of articles on Amateur Journalism to the Llandudno Advertiser.

THE SCOT, No's 13 to 18 to hand, MR GAVIN T MCCOLL is to be congratulated for successfully printing and editing his magazine in these strenuous times.

We have also received POSEY, a magazine devoted to poetry, and OUR MUTAL FRIEND, an M.S.S. magazine dealing with country-life.

Joseph Parks and *Vanity Fair*

(Concluded from Page 266)

Fair" will cease to be the official organ of the B.A.P.A.—the name of the Club had been changed to that of the older one, The British Amateur Press Association—which will have an official organ of its own. In future our pages will be devoted entirely to literary matter, published quarterly.

Something must have gone wrong with Mr. Parks' plan to publish quarterly: Number 14 did not appear until six years later, in September of 1925.

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IT MAY BE of interest to list a selection of the names to be found in Volume 1 of *Vanity Fair*—names that will be familiar to some of our readers today:

Ernest L. McKeag, Member Number 6 of The Amateur Press Club, who was a Sub-Lieutenant on a torpedo-boat; later with The Amalgamated Press for many years;

Leo George, actor on tour in India, who was Wheeler Dryden of England and Hollywood;

Arthur Harris, of Llandudno, Wales, Number 14; Number 447 of his *Interesting Items* is among "Magazines Received";

Wm. H. Gander, of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Number 54;

in *Vanity Fair* Number 10 I had an advertisement for *Magnets, Gems, Boys' Friends*; no-one wrote to me;

Miss Edna Hyde, New York, Number 55; active in American Amateur Journalism for many years; known later as Edna Hyde McDonald and "Vondy";

Frank Jay, Number 30, and Barry Ono, Number 117, both of London and well-known collectors of and dealers in Victorian boys' papers and "bloods";

J. A. Birkbeck, Durham, Number 102; printed, among other things, the war-time series of *Collector's Miscellany* in 1941-44;

H. P. Lovecraft, U.S.A., Number 74; became noted as a writer of "weird" tales;

H. Simpson, Leicester, who wrote and published a history of boys' journals (does anyone have a copy?);

A. L. Horsey, Leyton, Number 28, story paper collector; wrote an article for *S.P.C.* Volume 1;

W. Paul Cook, prominent U.S.A. amateur journalist.

AT A FUTURE date I may give some attention to Volumes 2 and 3 of *Vanity Fair*, and it might be worthwhile some time, when space permits, to reprint Frank Jay's two articles about earlier Victorian era boys' papers.

—W. H. G.

RING OUT THE OLD--- CONDEMN THE NEW!

By JIM COOK

WHEN *The Nelson Lee Library* changed its format in May of 1926 a larger publication emerged, with equally larger print and bigger illustrations. The stories were as good as they had been in the smaller editions and altogether the future of the paper promised well. That promise was kept. Some of the finest tales of St. Frank's appeared in the new *Nelson Lee Library* and if there were murmurs of discontent with the new set-up among the great multitude of readers I did not hear them. In fact, if memory serves, the circulation increased and the St. Frank's League, which was born just prior to the enlarged issue, gathered many more members at a quicker rate than hitherto.

I was an Organising Officer for the League in 1926 and I came into contact with many readers and members in my efforts to promote the League and at no time during the years that followed did I hear of one discordant note on the quality of the stories that appeared in *The Nelson Lee Library*.

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There may have been areas of disagreement on the type of story E. S. Brooks put out, but not to my knowledge were the quality and interest ever disputed. While some readers and members were demanding a type of series that they preferred, others were also writing in requesting a favourite country for an adventure series or another barring-out series, and so on.

NOW, in the twilight of our years, there appears an army of old-time readers of *The Nelson Lee Library*—and others—who have reached a conclusion, commensurate with their advancing years, that they did not like these yarns after all. And in the fullness of time it may well be that we shall be hearing from them a further evidence of their disenchantment and to the effect that *The Nelson Lee Library* did not suit them at all.

That period in the history of our hobby has not reached us, but it is a pitiful shame when memory leaves us to make way for old age. When we forget the highlights of our youth and the tender nostalgia that through the medium of these grand old magazines we read as boys we are able to maintain; when such magnificent tales of

St. Frank's as the St. Frank's On Its Honour series, the Great Flood series, the Funk of St. Frank's series, the Death of Walter Church series, Handforth the Outcast series, and oh, so many more; when these disappear from Life's Hall of Memories then one has really aged sour.

Does the reader recall that wonderful series The Cads of St. Frank's? Or the splendid African series? And the sparkling Feud series?—which I will never forget if I live to be a thousand!

How anybody can write of these tales now, declaring them inferior to those that appeared in the smaller issues of *The Nelson Lee Library*, is beyond my comprehension. These masterpieces of schoolboy fiction are today still masterpieces in spite of the Old Boys who have outlived their youth and live in an atmosphere heavy laden with recrimination.

THERE HAS always been a remarkable tendency ever since I can remember to grind down *The Nelson Lee Library* whenever or wherever it is mentioned. And invariably it is because other boys' papers have been open to criticism. *The Nelson Lee* becomes the Aunt Sally of those who think the

popularity of their favourite paper is threatened. It is always *The Nelson Lee Library*, it seems, which threatens to send *The Magnet*, *The Gem*, and other Hamilton papers into obscurity, for the readers of these papers rise up in their wrath at any given moment when *The N.N.L.* tends to appear higher in the scale of *vox populi*.

A favourite plan of attack is the "creeping barrage" variety. Somebody who has become disillusioned will remark or will have published a certain disapproval he has found in *The N.L.L.* and this will spark off first from one quarter and then from another an agreement of views. And when the tumult has died down it will re-appear later on with embellishments and a further cannonade of fault-finding.

The point has now been reached where *The Nelson Lee* entered into its first new series and if we were to believe some people it died from that period. But as I say, some of the finest series that ever appeared in the *Lee* were published in the new format, and I should not be surprised if, when the last collector of old boys' papers writes his Will and Testament, he will have only *Nelson Lees* left as evidence of a wonderful period of boys' papers. +

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STILL MORE MEMORIES

By HENRY
ADAMS PUCKRIN

*With a host of furious fancies,
Whereof I am commander,
With a burning spear and a horse
of air,
To the wilderness I wander.*

SO SINGS Tom-o'-Bedlam, and beyond doubt fact and fancy combined with a boundless imagination can travel far beyond the limits of time and space. There is no apparent limit to which it can take us, and as the most fantastic dreams of worlds far beyond this one look like coming true, the writer records a few more memories which have come to mind.

As before stated, there seems to be no known limit, but as there were "great men before Agamemnon" so the writers of the present time can claim kinship with those of a past age.

Whether there was a reading-public in those far-off days is somewhat in doubt, but there were plenty of writers to provide a foundation of fact, allied to fancy, for future generations to read and ponder over. As civilizations wax and wane so

does literature, and as "book larning" (*vide* Mr. Squeers and others of that ilk) is a known and very serious quantity to reckon with so will love of adventure reach to the most far-off limits.

With apologies for this somewhat lengthy introduction the writer will try to gather in a few more memories.

As far as fact and fiction are concerned the Greek writer Plato with his dream of the mythical *Atlantis*, followed by his *Republic*, seems in modern parlance to have set the ball rolling. They have provoked, and still do, endless discussion.

Sir Thomas More with his *Utopia*—the ideal state where all work for the common good—seems entitled to second place. He coined a word which has become a part of speech.

These examples may seem a long way from fantasy stories but there is no doubt that the seeds of popular fiction writing were sown by them.

A FAVOURITE theme of early writers was a power possessed by their heroes of transporting themselves through different periods of time, eventually returning to earth in more than one sense. One such work which this writer read as a boy was *Sir Wilfred and His Seven Flights*, but unfortunately the

author's name eludes him. Having tasted adventure to the full, the hero of this romance had to return, leaving his lady-love behind and having only his memories to console him.

Another work, by Edwin Lester Arnold, was called *Phra, the Phoenician* and is still obtainable with a little trouble. Unlike Sir Wilfred, Phra's adventures were of a more everyday type and were largely induced by a means he possessed of going into a cataleptic trance. For all that, it is a story off the beaten track and well worth reading.

This kind of writing provoked other authors into trying their hands at fantasy, including H. G. Wells. In *The Time Machine* his character was able to project himself thousands of years into the future but found himself in a fantastic dream-world of Nietzschean slaves and supermen.

All these examples have been and are being exploited to the full by American fiction-writers, and judging by the quantities seen in the shops the demand is continually growing.

Another story dealing with space conquest was read by this writer when he was a member of the Middlesbrough Public Library, but the title has been forgotten. It dealt with a marvellous space-ship which explored the stellar depths, and so

it antedates most fiction of a similar kind. One incident describes the space-ship's passage through a swarm of meteorites.

During subsequent adventures the space-travellers landed on a strange uninhabited world of fantastic and beautiful architecture. Anxious to procure a specimen of wonderful carving, they tried to obtain it by the use of diamond-hard tools and high-pressure cutting equipment, but to no purpose. This story has a rather tame finish but, like the others mentioned, it will if obtainable repay reading.

Jack London wrote a story in which an American professor, condemned to die for murder, was in fancy able to postpone the evil hour, and his adventures were concerned with various periods of the world's history.

At times the *Frank Reade Invention Library* had its heroes in the most fantastic and frightening situations, but the authors always brought them to safety.

HAVING taken a trip into the realms of fancy the writer, like the characters in the stories, now returns to reality and will close with a somewhat bizarre situation in which a member of the famous Harry Belbin trio, the Captain, the Cook, and the Engineer, once found himself. Cookey Scrubbs

— with his “ambone” — was shown in a front-page illustration of *Pluck Library*, apparently trapped in a room or cellar. He had just struck a match to find out where he was. All around and above him were mocking, leering faces and Cookey, looking thoroughly frightened, was trying to squeeze himself into as small a space as possible. This story might be classed as supernatural but the writer did not read it, so cannot say.

At times the *Frank Reade Invention Library* had its heroes in the most fantastic and frightening situations, but the authors were always able to bring them to safety.

Now, HAVING referred briefly to various fantasy stories, the writer concludes with the hope that there may be copies of the books available to those readers whose interest has been aroused.



A MIXED LOT: 7 . .

Students Publish A Weekly Newspaper

MEMORIES of *The Greyfriars Herald* and *Tom Merry's Weekly* were recalled recently when I was introduced to *Reefton's Own Junior Press*,

a weekly newspaper published by Form 11 of Reefton, New Zealand, District High School.

Reefton, an isolated small town on the West Coast, had been without a local newspaper for ten years until the pupils of Form 11 began the *Junior Press* in March of this year. It is a four-page cyclostyled effort, sells at threepence, and has a circulation of 300 copies.

Two Form 11 pupils, a girl and a boy, are the editors and six others act as sub-editors. The paper provides local news and an amusing “Children's Page,” more laughs being provided by a feature called “Around the Classrooms.”

Maybe the pupils who edit and contribute to *Reefton's Own Junior Press* have never heard of *The Greyfriars Herald*, *Tom Merry's Weekly*, or *Billy Bunter's Weekly*, but their journalistic efforts are following a famous tradition. —O. W. WADHAM
June, 1964.

* * *

This May Be Important!

To GET ON the S.P.C. mailing list is easy: just ask!

To get OFF the mailing list is even easier: just fail to acknowledge receipt of a copy for more than a year!

We are now operating on this basis: if *The Story Paper Collector*

is worth having, it is worth at least one note or postcard to each four issues. (Each single COPY of a twenty-page issue represents approximately half an hour's work and six cents in cash.) Lacking such acknowledgment, off the list a name comes!—Except, as previously noted, active amateur journalists (because we receive their magazines) and the university libraries. We receive lots of Christmas cards each December—for the purpose of our mailing list these are considered to be acknowledgments.

* * *

Diamond Jubilee

ARTHUR HARRIS's amateur magazine, *Interesting Items*, observed its Diamond Jubilee in March of 1964, and the occasion was honoured by the B.B.C. with a televised interview with Mr. Harris on the programme *Wales Today*. Arthur observed his magazine's anniversary with a special edition.

* * *

Irene Harris

IT WAS with much regret that I learned of the death on April 10th last of Irene Harris, wife of Arthur Harris, well-known amateur journalist of Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno, Wales. "She was a

delightful and lovable person," is the tribute of John and Charlotte Rackham.

Irene Harris must have been; she was an interested and helpful companion to Mr. Harris in his Amateur Journalism activities as well as editing her own small magazine, *Irene's Items*.

* * *

Robin Hood Stories

IN HIS comments on Robin Hood (S.P.C. Number 86) Gerry Allison writes that the Robin Hood stories series of 1919 portray him as an uncouth and graceless boor, with language coarse and leadership nil.

I am thankful that it wasn't my misfortune to have read that series. On the contrary, all the tales and histories of Robin Hood I have read cause him to stand forth as a gallant hero with a likable personality, without one dastardly deed or unkind thought being attributed to him.

Thomas Fuller, the 17th century antiquarian and divine, wrote in the Nottinghamshire section of his *History of the Worthies of England* (1662):

Camdem calls him the gentlest thief that ever was; and know, dear reader, he is entered into our catalogue, not for his thievery but for his gentleness.

It is well known that he robbed those who obtained their wealth by doubtful means and that he gave generously to the poor and the needy.

There are plenty of theories to indicate that Robin Hood did indeed exist. I believe the strongest can be obtained from the *Pipe Rolls* of 1228, 1230, and 1231, where the Sheriff of Yorkshire is reported to have owed the sum of 32/6d for the chattels of Robert Hood, fugitive. This was during the reign of Henry the Third. In Elizabethan times the story gained ground that he was of noble birth—the dispossessed Earl of Huntingdon.

—ARTHUR V. HOLLAND
Wellington, N.S.W.

LIKE Gerry Allison, I, too, played Robin Hood many a time as a boy, but my Robin Hood was the one portrayed in the early 1920s. I read a *Boys' Friend* 4d Library Robin Hood story some time back, in which Friar Tuck was portrayed as a greedy, deceitful character. The author certainly didn't know the Robin Hood gang as I know them.

—STAN KNIGHT
Cheltenham, Glos.

* * *

An O. B. B. *Who's Who*

COMPILED and edited by Brian Doyle (14a Clarendon Drive,

Putney, London S.W.15), the *Who's Who of Boys' Writers and Illustrators* is filled with information about those who helped to produce the story papers of by-gone years. There are 100 pages and the price is fifteen shillings plus maybe two shillings for overseas postage.

* * *

Words to Reflect Upon

SOME newspapers have a small feature, under a heading such as *From the Golden Books or Remembered Words*, in which are presented brief quotations from more or less well-known writers. Here is inaugurated such a feature in S. P. C.:

I strongly disagree with what you say, but I will defend with my life the right for you to say it.

—VOLTAIRE

This feature will now be discontinued.

* * *

ON PAGE 272 we have it "Form 11"; it is "Form II" in *Junior Press*, and no doubt J. P. is right.

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