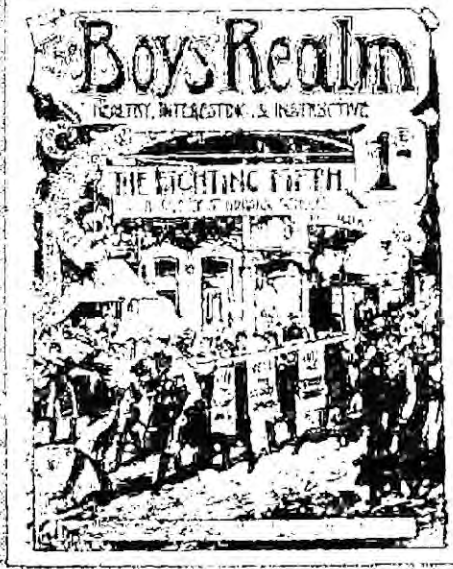
The Collectors Digest.

Vol.3. March 1949 No.27

A Scene from "The Fighting Fifth" - Nipper at St. Ninians by Maxwell Scott. Boys Realm. 22.6.07



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MARCH 1949

Editor, Miscellaneous Section
Herbert Leckenby, Telephone Exchange,
C/o Central Registry, Northern Command, York.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Concerning Mr. Poynter:- We have received details of a curious and not very happy transaction which we consider necessary to bring to the notice of all readers of the C.D.

Recently Bill Colcombe, well-known member of the clan, received a letter from Mr. Poynter, The Pavilion, Hor Hill Road, Tadworth, Surrey, offering 57 Sexton Blake Libraries Nos 345 to 401 in exchange for double the quantity of Magnets, Gems, Plucks, U.J's etc. There is an important point in passing: Mr. Poynter mentioned titles and authors, so it would appear that he had a knowledge of the subject of story paper collecting. Anyway, Bill thought the offer fair enough, so sent off 115 assorted Gems, Magnets and U.J's. What do you think he got in exchange? You'll never guess in a month of Sundays! Not the S.B.L's so clearly specified, but a load of - Woman's World's and John Bull's!!

Thinking he had received someone else's parcel in error - for not even a blind man could confuse the two papers mentioned.

Sexton Blake Libraries - Bill natureMy asked Mr. Poynter an explanation. Judge his surprise, dismay and indignation Mr. Poybter told him that he had got the same face value for e he had sent and if he didn't like it he could "go to ses"! Well, I ask you! If that extraordinary contention taken seriously, some of you might be receiving 20 War Cry's back numbers of News of the World in return for 40 cherished -covered Magnets!

Now that's not all. When I heard of this it struck a rd in my memory. Older readers of the C.D. will recall that years ago we had occasion to issue an emergency edition of C.D. - 3s. For the benefit of the scores of new subscribers have come along since, I might explain that it contained ils of some unsatisfactory transactions that were taking ce. In one instance Frank Snell of Bideford had agreed to hange some 250 Gems for a similar number of Magnets. Frank t off his Gems and waited hopefully for the Magnets to arrive never got them, despite the fact that the other party to the nsaction swore he had sent them, in two parcels.

In the course of correspondence which naturally followed, nk was offered one penny each, less postage, in payment for Gems, which the person concerned said he had already dis- ed of. Frank, needless to say, turned down this offer, so got nothing at all in return for his 250 Gems - not even n Bull's or Women's World's.

Now who do you think was the other party in the transaction , I daresay you've guessed it this time, it was - the same Poynter.

However, to return to the more recent case. Bill Colcombe, satisfied to let the matter rest where it was, put it in the ds of his solicitor. The letter wrote to Mr. Poynter demand- £5 for the Gems and U.J's sent. Somewhat to Bill's relief, he did not want to become involved in any expensive litiga- n, Mr. Poynter sent along a money order for £4-15-0d with a ggestion that the balance should be taken out of the papers ll had received.

Well, we considered it our duty to place the facts of this very happy business before our readers, and with a hope

that Mr. Poynter has had his lesson, there we will leave it.

-oOo-

The Re-opening of St. Jim's! Now ye Gemites, here's what you've been waiting for. The programme is as follows: "Tom Merry & Co of St. Jim's" (7/6) ready for March. "The Secret of the Study" (7/6), May or June; "Tom Merry's Summer Annual" (7/6) July or August. Moreover Messrs. Campion are planning a 1/- monthly, "Tom Merry's Own".

Well, I guess that will set you agog. The address of the publishers is Messrs. William Campion, Ltd., 26 Manchester Square London, W.1.

-oOo-

Attention, Soccer Fans! The numerous followers of the winter game will be interested to hear that a member of our circle, John E. Reynolds, 21 Clegg Street, Eccles, Manchester, has written a lively book entitled "Stars of Soccer". It contains many photographs of popular players of the day and is published by Day & Mason, 173 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4. Price 3/6.

-oOo-

Bereavement: I regret to announce that Leonard Packman's father died suddenly on Thursday, February 10th. I am sure all readers will join with me in expressing deepest sympathy with the popular chairman of the London Old Boys' Book Club in his great loss.

-oOo-

A Request: Years ago there appeared a number of stories concerning two schools, Wycliffe and Haygarth. They were written by J. N. Pentelow under one of his many pen-names Jack North. They were rattling good stories with some fine character drawing. Quite a number of collectors have a great admiration for them, but I feel they have never had the credit and the publicity they deserved. I propose to remedy this by writing an article about them with an eye on next year's Annual. I have a fair number of the stories of both schools in the Boys' Friend Library, but I should like to refresh my memory thoroughly. I don't suppose any of you who possessthem will want to sell them, so if anyone would be kind enough to loan me copies for a short time I should

be most grateful. I should particularly like to see those which appeared in "Pluck".

And that must be all for this month.

Yours sincerely,
HERBERT LECKENBY

———oOo———

RECAPTURE YOUR YOUTH! Send for my new list of old boy's books for sale. All your favourites:- Magnets, Gems, Populars, Nelson Lees, Union Jacks and dozens of others similar. Stamped addressed envelope, please. William Martin, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10.

WANTED: Comics; Sale, early B.O.P's, 2d each; Plucks, 1916, 9d. each; Gems, 1918, 1s. each; "Young England", 4s. E.V.Hughes, "Caswell", 25 Hillsboro Road, Bognor Regis.

EXCHANGE: Sale; offers Detective Weekly 1-50; Holiday Annual. Many others. Henry J. H. Bartlett, Pess Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

FOR SALE: Gems with covers, No's, 56, 68, 170, 189, 312, 398, 435, 437, 462, 528, 543, 2/- each.
Gems, no covers, 46, 58, 97, 113, 220, 286, 291, 318, 305, 419.
Gems, mint condition, 6d. each. 1263, 1490, 1491, 1492, 1412, 1449, 1422, 1432, 1421, 1411, 1427, 1385, 1386, 1312, 1373, 1304, 1309, 1310, 1234, 1315, 1316, 1496, 1436, 1428, 1505, 1504, 1513, 1539, 1545, 1551, 1552, 1554, 1555, 1515, 1516, 1517, 1549, 1550.
Schoolboys Own Libraries: 5, 32, 101, 115, 110, 126, 147, 153, 152, 155, 168, 202, 220, 1/6 each.
Holiday Annuals, 1927, 1929, 8/- each.
Prefers to sell in bulk. J. Shepherd, 1 Athelstan Close, Handsworth, Sheffield, 9.

FOR SALE: Union Jacks and Marvels, 1904-1920, and several odd copies of Boys' Friend 3d. Library, Diamond and similar. S.A.E. for list. W. H. Clough, 3 Fonthill Grove, Sale, Manchester.

Leaves from the Diary of Maxwell Scott

Continuity by J. P. Wood.

(Introduction:- Long ago in the golden years of the seri story, the boys of the period would await impatiently, eagerly, the publishing day of their favourite paper each week. When at last the day arrived, they would set off hot foot for their newsagents. They would plank down their penny, then emerge hurriedly turning the pages in order to learn how their hero ha extricated himself from the desperate plight at the end of the preceding instalment. They would give a sigh of relief when they saw all was well and their hero still in the land of the living.

The authors of the day were past masters at that kind of thing, none more so than Maxwell Scott, creator of Nelson Lee and several other detectives. Boys who read his stories idolised him, I among them, and there are quite a number of men still, who, down the years, have never ceased to honour his nam

They have long known he was Dr. Staniforth, and aware of his activities on the wild Yorkshire moors, but they longed for more news of him.

Picture then the thrill I got when I was handed several pages of manuscript containing extracts from the diaries of Maxwell Scott, sent by his son, the Rev. J.H.Maxwell Staniforth On the neatly typewritten pages I saw the old familiar names, Birds of Prey, The Silver Dwarf, The Missing Heir, and learned for the first time in what circumstances they were written and how much the author received for them, I said to myself, "What grand copy for the C.D."

Well, those notes from the diaries have been put into stor form by the experienced pen of J. P. Wood. That every word will delight those who thought so much of Maxwell Scott when they were boys goes without saying. I am sure, too, the story

will appeal to that numerous band who knew the later Nelson Lee of the St. Frank's days, for without Maxwell Scott there would have been no Nelson Lee Library. And I think, too, it will interest the members of the younger generation who had never heard of Maxwell Scott, for it is the intimate inside story of one of that grand little army of men who wrote clean, honest, thrilling stories to bring happiness to the hearts of boys.

When I had read those notes I immediately wrote Mr. Staniforth expressing my gratitude for his kindness in going to so much trouble. I also gave him some instances of the regard in which his father's name was held still by a number of men now getting on in life. In his reply Mr. Staniforth said my letter had moved him very deeply. All I can say is that the little intimate stories he told me of the wild countryside in which his father lived, and the description of the little churchyard in which he lies sleeping, moved me, too. His letter will ever remain one of my most cherished possessions.

And now read the opening instalment of our colleague, J. P. Wood's, absorbing story. - H.L.)

MAXWELL SCOTT! Who was this remarkable personality, an almost legendary figure to the youngsters of my own generation, yet so well-beloved by those of an earlier one? How did it come about that from the midst of his wanderings as a doctor over the Whitby Moors he produced a fictional character as "alive" as the cherished Sherlock Holmes, or the equally famous Sexton Blake? In this series of articles I hope to provide the answers, and to settle once and for all any questions as to the background of the creator of the Nelson Lee characters.

For many years, as a reader of the "Nelson Lee" library, I had wondered, when my thoughts were able to leave the enthralling latest adventure of the famous criminologist I was reading, who had first introduced him to an appreciative public. Sometime,

I thought, I would carry out some investigations of my own into this particular problem. Yet it was not until after the last war and my introduction to the Herbert Leckenby clan, that I was able to find the time to pursue my studies in this direction. I knew, of course, that Maxwell Scott was only the pseudonym of Dr. John William Staniforth, of Hinderwell, Yorkshire, but not until, as a result of much correspondence elsewhere, did I manage to get in touch with his son, the Rev. J.H.M.Staniforth, who very kindly gave me many details of his famous father's literary and personal activities, with full permission to publish them.

Here, then, are the fruits of that unexpected result of my labours, in the hope that they will prove as interesting to older members of the clan as to one of the youngest.

Dr. Staniforth was born in Sheffield on November 14, 1862, and took the M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P. diplomas in 1887, the year of the great small-pox epidemic in Sheffield. As a result, he was immediately offered the post of temporary medical officer in charge of the Totley hospital. This being a fever hospital, he was, of course, completely isolated from the world at large, and took to writing stories to pass the time. His first effort, a short story, "Told at Totley: a Romance of the Small-pox Hospital" was printed on March 10 in the "Sheffield Weekly Telegraph".

When the epidemic ended, he was appointed Senior Assistant House Surgeon at the Sheffield Royal Hospital, and started there on October 18, 1888. From time to time stories by him appeared in the Sheffield papers; some with a medical interest, others of a local antiquarian or historical nature.

In 1891, however, came the event which was to mean so much to the juvenile literature of the future. Symptoms of lung trouble necessitated his taking a practice away from the smoke-laden atmosphere of the industrial city, and he took up an appointment as surgeon to the Grinkle Ironstone mines at Hinderwell near Whitby. After marrying one of the nurses at the Sheffield Hospital, he removed to the moors and settled down to the practice to which the rest of his life was devoted.

In those far-off days there was no beneficent government to pay his salary, and as he had no private means he was hard put to it to make ends meet. When his son was born in 1893, it became

increasingly necessary for him to find some means of implementing his small income, and so he turned in earnest to the writing of fiction. His practice, however, was always the main interest in his life. In September 1913, he was thrown from his bicycle by a dog which suddenly ran in front of him, and fractured his humerus. The subsequent strain of the war years brought out underlying and unsuspected injuries which finally developed into the slow, incurable, paralysis agitans.

Becoming worse year by year, he gave up his work, sold his practice, and died at Bemford, Sheffield, on January 3, 1927. His remains were taken back to Hinderwell, where they were interred in the churchyard. His funeral was one of the biggest seen in the district, and was eloquent testimony to the popularity which he had won during his lifetime there.

As were most of the men of his day, Dr. Staniforth was a keen politician, and was a staunch supporter in his young days of Mundella, the Sheffield M.P. who became President of the Board of Trade in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet of 1886. In the election of 1910, Dr. Staniforth took a very active part, being invited to address the first big meeting of the campaign in the Temperance Hall, Whitby, and later addressing several smaller meetings in the constituency.

He later records in his diary, "the Liberal agent asked me, in confidence, if I would seriously consider the question of standing as the Liberal candidate at the next election, whenever that might be: but I told him, of course, that the idea was quite out of the question." In fact, the actual candidate chosen at the next election, and who was energetically supported by Dr. Staniforth, was Mr. Herbert Samuel, now Lord Samuel. By his recommendation, Dr. Staniforth was later placed on the Commission of the Peace, and so became a J.P.

Dr. Staniforth's hobby was astronomy, and in his youth he spent a great deal of time assisting his father, who was one of Sheffield's leading amateur astronomers and kept up much correspondence with scientific journals. He inherited his father's telescope, a large cumbersome affair, which was set up at Hinderwell, and with which he continued his observations.

His son now writes: "The time I remember best was when it

was used to watch the passage of the Channel Fleet on their way north past our seaside village. That would be, I think, in connexion with the festivities and naval reviews at the accessio of George V. Although the great ships were far out at sea, the telescope, of course, brought them 'into our garden'; and great was our satisfaction when, after we had patriotically 'dipped' the Union Jack on our flagstaff, we saw a keen-eyed Yeoman of th Signals on the bridge of the flagship, miles away on the horizon make a report to the officer of the watch - and a moment later the battleship's White Ensign fluttered up and down three times in stately acknowledgement of our salute."

To whom did Maxwell Scott owe much of his inspiration? Who was "Stein Cortley"? How did Maxwell Scott choose his nom-de-plume and the name of his famous detective? How was the rival Sexton Blake built up into world-wide fame, and why? The answe will be found in my next dip into the diaries of Maxwell Scott, to be reproduced in these pages next month.

------oOo------

REPORT ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF THE LONDON OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB HELD AT 706, LORDSHIP LANE, WOOD GREEN, N.22 ON SUNDAY, 13th FEBRUARY, 1949.

The muster at the first anniversary Meeting of the Club amounted to sixteen, which was quite satisfactory when the number unable to be present owing to ill health and pressure of time were take into account.

Commencing at 4.30 p.m. with Mrs. Len Packman deputising for her husband, who was unable to be present owing to the sudden death of his father, in the chair.

The minutes were read and passed after two questions had been asked. The first dealt with the list of members which was omitted from the February issue of the C.D. The second questio on the motion of Mr. R. Blythe called for the amendment of the last paragraph, section B, rule 3. On a vote this was carried and left in Mr. John Geel's capable hands.

Correspondence was then dealt with. Mr. Parratt sent a letter tendering his resignation from the club owing to being unable to spare the time to attend meetings. Another letter from the publishers of the Tom Merry books giving the dates of publishing was read for all concerned and interested.

The Treasurer's report came next and a fairly sound financial position was announced. Members present expressed their appreciation and confidence in the treasurer. Three new members were then officially welcomed, these being Miss P. Pluck, Miss Flinders, and G. C. Foster.

Mr. R. Blythe then suggested that we hold an exhibition at the Islington Public Library where the authorities are favourably impressed by the idea. Mr. Blythe said, "What York could do, London could do likewise." Afterwards perhaps the exhibition could be held at other London libraries. All members were asked to cooperate and loan copies of the Old Boys' papers of the past. The proposition was agreed to unanimously and the first meeting was arranged for.

Mr. Ian Whitmore then handed in a good amount of Rookwood jottings for which the club expressed their best thanks.

The chairman then announced the resignation of Mrs. Eileen Whiter from the duties of secretary. Her successor was Mr. Ben Whiter who was proposed by R. Blythe and seconded by John Geal. A hearty vote of thanks was then accorded to the retiring secretary proposed by B. Whiter and seconded by John Geal. This was the last item on the agenda and the meeting closed at 5.45 p.m.

During the party which followed members enjoyed games and a quiz. The latter was an Object one and great intelligence and ingenuity were shewn by the members. First was Charlie Wright followed by John Geal second and Ian Whitmore third. The alphabetical competition was a great success and after eight rounds was won by Robert Whiter with John Geal and Mrs. Len Packman second and third respectively. A drawing competition was also greatly enjoyed and caused great laughter. The numerous artists present kindly judged the results and Robert Blythe was placed first with John Geal and Eileen Whiter as runners up. Other party games followed and some very good impressions were given in the charades, especially Mr. R. Mortimer's juggling act of either

Wun Lung or Kipps. Miss Butcher was good in portraying the "Magnet". When followed a humorous passage from No. 35 New Series Nelson Lee Library, "Handforth's Ghost Hunt", ably read Robert Blythe and very much enjoyed by all present.

Mrs. Eileen Whiter was to be congretulated on the very fin array of sandwiches and cakes prepared for the members' refresh ments. A fine first anniversary birthday cake complete with c candle had been made by her, and after Miss Mortimer had extin-guished the flame, Mrs. Len Packman cut the first slice. But all good times have to come to an end and the last members departed about 9.30 p.m.

Attendence: Mrs. Len Packman, Mr. and Mrs. C. Wright, Mr. and Mrs. R. Whiter, Mr. R. Blythe, Miss L. Butcher, Mr. and Mrs. John Geal, Mr. R. Mortimer and Miss Mortimer, Miss Flinder Miss P. Pluck, B. Whiter and G. C. Foster.

The next meeting has been fixed for Sunday 6th March at a venue to be decided and at which all members will be informed.

BENJAMIN G. WHITTER
(Hon. Secretary)

———oOo———

MORE ABOUT A MEMORABLE EXHIBITION

By Herbert Leckenby

When the time drew near for the opening of the Exhibition of Boys' Papers at York Public Library, I felt a little nervous I had a fear that I might walk in and find the place deserted. I can afford to smile now at my fears, for on every occasion I paid a visit I found a goodly company there; on the Saturdays especially it was as busy as a hive. So much interest did it create in fact that it was extended into the third week, and as will be seen from a kindly note from the Librerian in our lette columns, it is estimated between 7,000 and 8,000 people paid a visit. I am sure all will agreed that that was a very find record. We had some splendid publicity, too, as will have bee seen from the reproduction in our pages (unfortunately one of t for some inexpicable reason came out indistinctly last month) a all round the hobby was much in the limelight.

Popular "penny dreadfuls"

MORE than 7,000 people, it is estimated, visited York public library to see the exhibition of "propenny bloods, penny dreadfuls and ha'penny marvels" which closed last week after a run of nearly three weeks. A few extra days were tagged on to the end of its scheduled run which was from 17 to 29 January.

A glance into the exhibition showed that the most delighted of the faces peering into the glass showcases were those of the adult visitors to whom a reflowing Magnet was a lantern gleaming in the mist of boyhood memories.

Remarkable interest is shown in adventure fiction of this type in this country and abroad Mr Herbert Leckenby, of York, who provided most of the collection seen at the library, gets a postbag of more than 40 letters each week from enthusiasts all over the world.

The Bishop's Magnets

AND you would be surprised at the variety of people from whom them come, says Mr Leckenby. Among his correspondents is an Irish Bishop who is anxious to obtain pre-1912 Magnets and Gems. Another is Frank Pettingell, the actor and broadcaster, who loves to browse over a Dick Turpin between acts."

Other regular correspondents are schoolmasters, solicitors professional and business men of all kinds, and ages, engineers, artists, clerks, musicians, policemen, and several housewives. One of the most distant is a B.A. in Australia.

"And then there's Charles Hamilton, who writes under the names of Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest, Ralph Redway and Hilda Richards. At 72 he's tapping away at his typewriter turning out stories as energetically as he did at 22—apparently endowed with the elixer of youth he gave to Tom Merry and Company."

I had pleasure in welcoming four members of the circle. Harry Dowler came all the way from Manchester for a few hours. Reg. Hudson from Leeds, Clive Simpson from Knaresborough and Jim Shepherd travelled the fifty odd miles from Sheffield. All seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. There was one little tragedy. Tom Sinclair and his wife came over from Leeds, only to find on arrival they had chosen early closing day, and in Tom's rueful words afterwards, "All we saw was part of a 'Jester' as we peered through the glass of the closed door." Sorry, Tom. If only you had given me time to warn you.

As I said last month, the interest shown by the ladies was remarkable. They were every bit as keen as their men folk. On the day Jim Shepherd was with me, for instance, we heard two of them animatedly discussing the Magnet and Gem. We got into conversation with them and found they had been keen readers of the two papers. Miss Flinders would have enjoyed talking to one of them in particular, for her favourites had been dear old "Gussy" and "Mauly". Jim had a good chuckle over the incident later.

Yes, it goes without saying that oft-times when I enter the York Public Library in future I shall think of the days when the "old boys' papers" were displayed in all their glory in its stately "Hunt Room", and of the crowds who came along to see the

And now, as will be seen from the report of the Old Boys' Book Club, there is a prospect of live-wire Bob Blythe organising a similar show at Islington Town Hall. May it be at least as successful as the one held here in York is my sincerest wish.

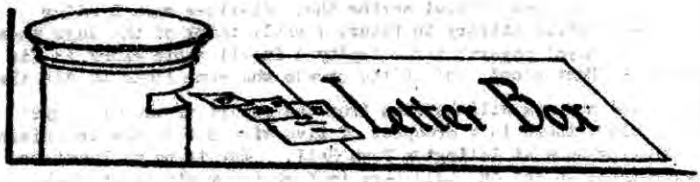
———oOo———

SEVENTY YEARS OF THE B.O.P.

About thirty years ago I had my first introduction to the "Boys' Own Paper". Previously to this I knew the good old "Magnet" and the "Gem", but it was not until I went to a boarding school that I first perused a B.O.P. Some of the boys at school had it month by month and naturally it was circulated round the various forms. And so with drawings from it copied in my autograph book and then during the holidays visiting my grandma, who gave me an old bound volume, I became a confirmed reader. And so it was with pleasure that I read in the January 19 issue of the London "Daily Mirror", circulation four million, an article by Giles Knight of the seventieth birthday of the B.O.P. 70 years and still going strong with all the up to date ideas. The present editor, Jack Cox, who celebrates his 33rd birthday anniversary on the same day as the B.O.P's anniversary, says that the readers are most critical and he gets some strange requests. Many notable authors have contributed to its pages during its long career, including the far-seeing Jules Verne. The various articles must have interested boys of all testes, and even now it is a pleasure for me to take down a volume from my brother's collection and peruse same. And so let the congratulations of the various collectors of our circle go out to this old boys' paper of the past which is still delighting the many young readers of today.

BENJAMIN G. WHITER.

WANTED: Football and Sports Libraries, Champions, Triumphs. John W Gocher, Junr., Victoria Cottage, Constitution Hill, Sudbury, Suffolk.



Public Library,
Museum Street, York.
7th February, 1949.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

Now that the Exhibition of boys' papers is over, I should like to thank you very warmly for your kindness in lending the material.

The exhibition was really successful, and gave great satisfaction to many people. It is likely that seven or eight thousand saw the exhibits, and their obvious pleasure well repaid our efforts.

Yours faithfully,
R. DOHERTY,
City Librarian

(How about showing this letter to your town or city librarian, with a suggestion that he follow suit? - H.L.)

Six Hits!

64, Woodland Road,
Ilford, Essex.
22.1.49.

Dear Editor,

I cordially agree with the suggestion made by Brother Leonard Packman in the January C.D., that collectors and sentimentalists should each select six outstanding stories, but would

suggest that these are restricted to the books we read in our youth. We all had our boyhood favourites and the desire to re read these in maturity is usually the first step taken on the road to becoming a collector.

With collectors' ages ranging from 70 to 13 years, it is obvious that their selections would also range over a similar period but, making due allowance for differences in taste, woul give a reasonable indication of what can be considered the out-standing stories of five decades.

My own field is wide and I could easily nominate many more but the following are six stories which thrilled me in my boyho and still hold my interest today.

Wings of Gold	by Sidney Drew	Boys Herald	1903
Circus Ned	by Henry St.John	" "	1904
The Armordale College Mystery	by Derwent Miall	Nuggets	1905
Tom Merry's Day Out	by "Martin Clifford"	Gem	1907
Figgins' Fig Pudding	" " "	"	1908
The School's Dishonour	by R.A.H.Goodyear	Nugget Library	1908

I have purposely omitted Christmas and similar double numb which have a charm of their own and if I had to select one of these I would award the palm to:-

The Ghost of St. Jim's by "Martin Clifford" Gem, Xmas 190

It will be noted that not a single Magnet yarn figures on my list although I read this paper equally with the Gem up to 1914. Although uniformly good, I can recall nothing outstandin and rate the Magnet of this period as secondary to the Gem.

Sincerely yours,

J. MEDCRAFT

Chelsea House,
Wick, Bristol.
February 1st, 1949.

Dear Editor,

I find it very difficult to remember six outstanding storie but probably because of their particular associations I would say they are:-

The Ghost of St. Jim's (Gem),
The House on the Heath (Magnet),
The Phantom of Tregellis Castle (N. Lee),
After Lights Out (B.F. 3d.),
Cast Out from the School (Gem),
Loyal to the Last (Gem).

Yours sincerely,
P. A. WALKER.

The Warwick Reynolds Controversy

Grove Road,
Surbiton.
11th February, 1949.

Dear Mr. Editor,

I cannot take exception to Mr. Walker's courteous brickbat in connection with my reference to Warwick Reynolds' illustration in a certain Christmas Number of the Gem. Undoubtedly I was wrong in expressing as a fact what was only my personal opinion.

Actually I knew Warwick Reynolds, and met him on several occasions. He was a charming man and a great Christian. Whatever criticism could be made of his work in the Gem, there was one field in which he was unequalled. His drawings from Nature were undoubtedly the finest I have ever seen.

Generally speaking, his work was not popular with Gem readers of his day. Though he had actually illustrated St. Jim's before Macdonald took over the Gem, Mac had drawn for the paper for several years before he, Mac, went to the war. Schoolboys are notoriously conservative, and they resented Reynolds as something of an interloper, unjust though this was.

All the same, Reynolds had an exaggerated style in drawing human beings, and his Ratcliff, Selby, etc. were completely repulsive and unnatural. Though his work contained more character, he could never sketch the attractive youngsters in the same way that Macdonald could.

I did not consider the Xmas No. illustration from an artistic viewpoint. The sketch of Pepper in same was, in my opinion, hideous, and unsuitable for a Christmas Number. But it was

merely my opinion, as Mr. Walker points out, and if anybody considers it a fine picture, he is certainly entitled to do so.

Yours Truly,
ERIC FAYNE.

The Mystery of Prosper Howard

27, Archdale Road,
East Dulwich,
LONDON, S.E.22.

Dear Editor,

In Collector's Digest No.8 (Vol.1) we are given to understand by Roger Jenkins that Charles Hamilton wrote "The School Under Canvas" (Rylcombe Grammar School) under the pen-name of Prosper Howard. In the C.D. Annual (1948) however, Eric Fayne stetes that Mr. Hamilton does not claim the authorship of the Grammar School tales.

I have always been under the impression that stories of Teddy Baxter & Co. of Claremont (Chuckles) and Gordon Gay & Co. of Rylcombe (Empire and Dreadnought) were written by Mr. Hamilton under the name of Prosper Howard. Knowing Eric as I do, I am sure his statement is accurate and Mr. Hamilton certainly known whether he wrote them or not!

Nevertheless, the question is very mystifying and, through the medium of our magazine, I would like to ask:- CAN YOU OR ANY READER TELL ME WHO IS OR WAS PROSPER HOWARD?

Youre sincerely,
LEONARD PACKMAN.

MODERN BOYS for Sale or Exchange; a complete set from No.1 to end, less only 3 copies. Would exchange for Nelson Lees, preferably old series, Magnets or Gems. E. McPherson, 80 Benedict Street, Glastonbury, Somerset.

WANTED URGENTLY: Gems No's 356, 358 and 359. Top prices paid. Leonard Packman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

WANTED: Aldine Publications, Turpins, Duvals, Robin Hoods, etc. E.R. Landy, 4 Nuneaton Road, Dagenham, Essex.

The Nelson Lee Column

Conducted by Robert Blythe,
81 Alsen Road, Holloway, London, N.7.

Mr. Ben Whiter, of London, at the last Book Club meeting, asked me quite casually what the St. Frank's motto meant. I promised to find out in time for this month's issue. Little did I know what I was letting myself in for! After surrounding myself with Latin-English dictionaries and doing my level best to make some sense out of the whole thing, I had to give it up. I then did, what I should have done in the first place. I handed the whole headache to my friend Mr. John Hewes who takes this sort of thing in his stride. After a couple of days he gave me the "gen". It occupied a whole sheet of foolscap! Most of it was way above my head and I'm sorry I can't give the whole explanation. However, I think that this sentence will answer Ben's query. "To summerize:- a fair interpretation of the phrase as a whole might be 'to live purposefully and one accord, to strive for the higher and more worthy things of life, and never demeaning oneself with whatever is debasing' - in a cold English phrase, 'Resolution and Integrity'." Or in other words - to use army language, "Bash on, Chums" !! So there you are, Ben, and I hope you don't cook up any more questions like that!

Mr. Webb in a very interesting letter, which I shall enter into more fully next month, points out that in the list I gave last month No. 56 occurs twice. Actually the author of this copy is unknown to me. Mr. Webb tells me also that he considers that it was written by Arthur S. Hardy. Is there anyone else who can back up that statement? The title is "The Case of the Fatal Fight". Other titles by the same author are:- "The Missing Gainsborough", "Champion of the Channel", "Vipart Reeves, Detective".

Our worthy editor tells me that Mr. Southway of South Africa has asked what are the titles of the "Monster" Library, and he suggests that I give the list in this column. As a matter of fact, Mr. Tom Armitage gave the list in the very first copy of the C.D.

...t as this copy is as scarce now as a pre-St. Franks Nelson Le... ...a Red-covered Magnet, I'm sure he will forgive me if I repea... it here.

Here you are, then, Mr. Southway, (I haven't heard from yo... yet, but I hope it will not be long before I do). Here is the ... complete list of the Monster Library:-

No. 1. The Schoolboy Treasure Seekers. Nov. 1925.
" 2. The Black Sheep of the Remove. December 1925.
" 3. The Tyrant of St. Frank's. January 1926.
" 4. The Boy from Bermondsey. February 1926.
" 5. The Bullies of St. Frank's. March 1926.
" 6. Expelled. April 1926.
" 7. 'Neath African Skies. May 1926.
" 8. St. Frank's in London. June 1926.
" 9. The Boy from the Bush. July 1926.
" 10. The Spendthrift of St. Frank's. August 1926.
" 11. The Barring-out at St. Frank's. September 1926.
" 12. The Mystery Master. October 1926.
" 13. The Voyage of the Wanderer. November 1926.
" 14. The Ghost of Bannington Grange. December 1926.
" 15. The Boy Who Vanished. January 1927.
" 16. St. Frank's on the Spree. February 1927.
" 17. Prisoners of the Mountains. March 1927.
" 18. The Remove in the Wild West. April 1927.
" 19. Rebels of the Remove. May 1927.

Here is the second list of start-stop No's of the series.

No's 195-204 - The Bullies League.
" 205-212 - Nipper Expelled.
" 213-220 - Jack Grey's Treasure Hunt in the Sahara.
" 221-228 - St. Frank's in London.
" 229-236 - Barring-out against Mr. Martin.
" 237-239 - Christmas at Dorriemore Castle.
" 240-249 - Introducing Hon. Doug. Singleton (the Spendthrif...
" 250-255 - The Servants' Strike.
" 256-263 - Mr. Heath (Handforth's Brother-in-law) as Remove Form Master.
" 264-274 - St. Frank's Adventures on the Amazon.

N.B. Correction from last month. Colonel Clinton series 187-194 not 196.

And so, on to this month's list of titles which, at last, contains the St. Frank's stories.

No.111 - The Yellow Shadow.
" 112 - Nipper at St. Frank's (1st St. Frank's story).
" 113 - The Abduction of Lady Marjorie.
" 114 - The Boy from Californie (Intro. Justin B. Farmin).
" 115 - Eileen Dare's Triumph.
" 116 - Fullwood's Victory.
" 117 - The Clue of the Decoy Letter.
" 118 - The Verdict of the School.
" 119 - The City of Burnished Gold.
" 120 - The Messages of Mystery.
" 121 - The Circle's Great Coup.
" 122 - The Mystery of Bridge House.
" 123 - The Island Stronghold.
" 124 - The Compact of Three.
" 125 - The Mystery of the Blue Volume.
" 126 - The Problem of the Copper Frog.
" 127 - The Underground Fortress.
" 128 - The Mystery of the Pink Package.
" 129 - Fullwood's Cunning.
" 130 - The Phantom of Tregellis Castle.

———oOo———

In Explanation. - It will be noticed that a cigarette card advertisement appears on the inside cover of this issue. This was inserted by one of our veteran members, W. Lawson, owner of one of the largest collections of old boys' books. Whilst the "news" in our columns will always be strictly confined to our own particular hobby, we do not see any objection to any member who is also interested in something else making use of the C.D. instead of going elsewhere. But adverts will be accepted from no one else. - H.L.

WANTED: Early Issues of Gem, Magnet, Pluck, Dreadnought. A few Magnets and Gems for disposal and Red-Covered Magnets for Exchange only. Eric Fayne, 23 Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

FOR SALE:- 34 Populars (1924-26), 130 Nelson Lees, (Mostly old series 1917-24), 30 Gems (1928-30), 4 Monster Libraries, 150 Union Jacks (1922-28). W. Colcombe, 256 South Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

STOP PRESS

Happy Frank Richards! - He Thrives on Work.

February 22nd, 1949.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for the February C.D., as good as ever, if not better. I am very glad indeed to hear that the show was such a success. I am especially glad that the Braille book was in evidence. There are now two Bunter books in Braille, and I should be glad to send a copy at any time to any old reader who now reads with his fingers. I think I told you that "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School" is to be published in Braille, though exactly when I do not yet know: it is rather a big undertaking.

It was quite a thrill to see the cover of the C.D. this ti It is well over forty years since I wrote "King Cricket" for th Boys' Realm: and I still think it one of the best serials I ev did for the A.P. Your cover picture recalled happy memories of days when the author was a good deal more active than he is the present year of grace. I was living in London then, and used to go to the old Carmelite House in a hansom cab! Things have changed rather since then.

But the world still seems to me as jolly an old place as ever. You wouldn't guess - or perhaps you would! — how exhilarating it is to have all the old characters jostling one another on the typewriter — Bunter one day, Tom Merry another, Mookwood another, then Carcroft, and King of the Islands. I a told that the first Tom Merry book will be out next month. Th second "The Secret of the Study" two or three months later: th in the summer, "Tom Merry's Summer Annual", with an assortment stories about all or nearly all the old schools: and later in the year, "Tom Merry's Christmas Annual", which I am now writin They will be published under the imprint of "Mandeville Publica tions", at 26, Manchester Square, W.1.

So, you see, these be rather busy days: with Bunter in Brazil coming out at Easter, and "Bessie Bunter of Cliff House School" in October along with "Billy Bunter's Christmas Party". Two more Bunter books are planned for Easter 1950, in one of wh our fat friend himself in the South Seas — "Billy Bunter among

the Cannibals". In the other, I think Wibley — if you remember him — will be somewhat to the fore. I am looking forward to writing them, with so much anticipation, that really I should like to write both at once!

We are getting some glorious weather in this region, and I don't think I ever felt better in my life. They say that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy — but in my humble opinion all play and no work is a good deal worse. But I am a very lucky man, in that what I call my work is play to me.

With kindest regards,
Always yours,
FRANK RICHARDS.

(We simply had to get this in somehow. — H.L.)

TRY THE THRILLER"

By C. James Perratt

I wonder how many people who read this are finding it hard to get a collection together, owing to the scarcity of books. Let me suggest to you a solution. Why not try the "Thriller"? Most of the Sexton Blake authors wrote for it and some of the world's finest writers of mystery stories contributed to make it one of the best books ever to be issued.

What do you think of these names? Gwyn Evans. Ledbroke Black. John G. Brandon. Anthony Skene. Robert Murray. John Hunter. G. H. Teed. Gilbert Chester, to mention just a few of the "Union Jack" authors. These names were joined in the pages of the "Thriller" by even more famous ones. Names that are familiar to cinema-goers both in this country and in America. Names that are sought after in public libraries and whose dramatised novels are heard on the radio by millions.

Who has not heard of that king of story-tellers Edgar Wallace? What magic lies in the words "The Saint"? Leslie Charteris brought him to life for the "Thriller". Then there is Berkeley Gray (our old friend Edwy Searles Brooks) who gives us Norman Conquest, a figure in the same class as the Saint. Berry Perowne gives us

"Raffles". David Hume with Mick Cardby. Bruce Greeme and "Blackshirt". Roland Daniel and Wu Fang. Stories by Peter Cheyney, J. Jefferson Farjeon, Sydney Horler, Gerald Verner, Gerard Fairlie, and a host of others. Some of the finest read to be found anywhere is between the covers of this book.

First issued in February 1929, it ran for 587 numbers, unt May 1940, when it ceased to be printed owing to the paper short age during the war.

It doesn't look as though it will be issued again, so I of you this advice: start collecting it now, the price of this boo will rise during the next couple of years.

——oOo——

In our February issue one of the reproductions of the repo on the York Exhibition came out badly. This was unfortunate, for it was a very interesting one. We have therefore tried again; we think with more success.

——oOo——

APOLOGY

27, Archdale Road,
E. Dulwich, S.E.22.

To all my friends whose letters during the past few weeks have not been answered with the usual promptness, will you please accept my apologies. The recent unexpected death of my father and its consequential duties has taken up all my time.

All letters will be cleared up as soon as possible.

LEONARD PACKMAN

——oOo——

SALE OR EXCHANGE: 100 Magnets, 1400-1600; 250 Gems, 1400-16 3 vols. Modern Boy, 1-75 (1st series) - less No.51; 3 vols. Ranger, 1-86; Odd Modern Boys, Boys' Magazine; Pilots; S.O. small "Lee"s, B.F.Libs.; etc. WANTED: Magnets, 1923-32; an Boys' Magazines. H.A. Smith, 13 New Road, Scole, Diss, Norfo

Please address ALL correspondence relating to Sexton Blake to the Editor of Blakiana, H. M. Bond, 10 Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

THE ROUND TABLE

Before going on to other matters I must make a few remarks upon the letter from Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks which appeared in the Letter Box of the general section last month. It was very nice to hear that the author of the St. Frank's stories always likes to hear from the Old Timers who used to read his Nelson Lee stories. I take it that he would be none the less pleased to hear from admirers of his pre-war Sexton Blake stories in which he featured the redoubtable Rupert Waldo, strong man and gentleman crook. He does not refer to these stories but it is obvious when reading some of his modern Inspector Cromwell stories (yes, and Norman Conquest stories too) that he has not forgotten them. I was forcibly reminded of this when reading a recent "Victor Gunn" novel, or rather series of novels (three to be exact), entitled "Three Dates With Death" published in November 1947 by Collins at 7/6d. The first story did not sound at all familiar, but when I started on No. 2 I thought to myself, "the heading of this chapter sounds very familiar - um - let me see now. Ah, I remember - that old U.J. I was reading the other day with a story by E.S.Brooks entitled 'Quivering Steel' - that was it." And turning to the said U.J. I found that Inspector Cromwell's second date with death

"By The Side Of a Grave" was merely a rehashed "Quivering Steel
Later on the title of the third story "Within The Sight Of Eros
recalled yet another old U.J. story featuring Eustace Cavendish
entitled "The Case Of The Three Black Cats", only poor old Eust
became Algy Pirbright in the new version, the story was the sam
to all intents and purposes. If Mr. Brooks is under the im-
pression that his old Blake stories are not good enough for the
modern reader (either juvenile or adult) he need not be afraid,
They are, for, being a librarian I can inform him that both
"Ironsides" and Norman Conquest are great favourites. It is
probable that the modern reader of "Three Dates With Death" wou
scorn the idea of reading the "Union Jack" and would be horrifi
at the thought of Sexton Blake, yet that same individual laps u
Messrs. Cromwell and Conquest with great gusto, in the case of
the book in question, without an idea that he was actually read
a rehashed Blake story of 1929! I would suggest that Mr. Broo
is not living in such a different kind of world after all. If
is, it is most apparent that he has to often dip into the past
for inspiration, which only goes to show what good stuff he use
to turn out! But for my part I would much rather see those
Waldo and Eustace stories reprinted in the "Sexton Blake Libra
It does not seem right to us old timers that Sexton Blake's pa
triumphs should be pinched by a couple of newcomers. Those
wishing to check on what I have said should turn up their U.J'
No's 1354 dated September 28th 1929 and 1384 dated April 26th
1930.

My request for articles and features for Blakiana seems t
have met with some success at least. A couple of readers see
to be quite upset over my last Blakiana. One suggested that
sounded rather embittered. Well, maybe I was when I wrote th
editorial. I had visions of the whole section going "west".
But the outlook is brighter now and I hope that others who hav
NOT written to me will hurry up and do so.

During the past few weeks I have acquired a number of old
"Union Jacks" of the 1918-1920 period and in one of these,
No.833 entitled "The Riddle Of The Rector's Wife", I had quite
shock. It has been often stated that Lewis Jackson was the
creator of Leon Kestrel and as far as I can see there is no qu
tion of doubt that he indeed was. It has also been decided t
Hylton Gregory and H. Gregory Hill were one and the same, as t
undoubtedly were if we are to believe all the data unearthed b

one and the other. Imagine my shock then, when I read that "The Riddle of The Rector's Wife" was introducing Leon Kestrel, the Master Mummer, and was written by "the clever author of "The Red Heart Of The Incas"!* Did H. Gregory Hill borrow Kestrel for this story? Were Hill and Gregory two nom-de-plumes of Lewis Jackson's? Once more we have a ticklish problem in the eternally interesting history of Sexton Blake.

Cheerio for now,

H. Maurice Bond.

*Proved as being by H. Gregory Hill.

SEXTON BLAKE'S GOLDEN AGE

A new article by
Rex Dolphin.

Part 1

The Galaxy of talent represented by a brilliant band of writers; the fascinating characters who opposed or assisted Blake; Blake's own personal popularity; the excellence of the illustrations; the intimate spirit existing between editor and readers: all these combine to make the "decade" roughly bounded by the years 1920 and 1930 the Golden Age in Sexton Blake's history.

To my regret I have been able to read only sample stories of the years preceding 1920; these have seemed over-melodramatic and not too convincing. The years after 1930 evidenced a rapid decline which is only too painfully obvious: the "Union Jack" became "Detective Weekly", which was good for a short period, then Blake was literally thrown out. The "Sexton Blake Library" staggered on, its crutches being the reprints of Golden Age stories.

At other times there have been stories of equal merit, (even to-day an occasional brilliant story appears) but never was there such a period when you could bank on nearly every yarn being a winner. Never were so many good authors banded together at one time. Never were the publishers so proud of Sexton Blake. To-day they seemed ashamed of him.

At the same time we must guard against the natural emotion of over-glamourising the past. Many of us were boys at that time. And boys can assimilate reading matter that would only irritate an adult with some perception of style, characterisation and plot. There was also perhaps the flavour of "forbidden fruit", for this healthy literature was often disapproved of. Stories which thrilled me as a boy leave me cold now. No doubt when I first read them every idea was new. Now it appears hackneyed. In other words, I can't lose myself in a story so easily. I'm glad to say, though, that many Blake stories do still have that hypnotic effect on me.

To see how ageless is this over-glamourising of the past, we only have to remark the following sequences: - In 1949 we are saying that the stories of to-day are much inferior to those of 20-25 years ago. In 1926 the editor of the "Union Jack" (No.1161) was quoting readers' letters saying that the 1926 stories were inferior to those of the past. He countered by quoting from an editorial in "Union Jack" No.523 of 1913, when readers were were complaining that the stories of the past were best! So, if the contention were true, then the very first Sexton Blake story of all was the best ever. Do you believe that?

No - we have good stories to-day; and the Golden Age was not an unbroken run of masterpieces. So before I start singing its praises, a gurgle with some of its weak points will do no harm. Apart from the occasional poor "complete" story there were a number of character series which I heartily disliked and still do. Some even were by favourite authors. Anthony Skene's "Fifth Man" and "Gargoyle" series, for instance. And Gwyn Evens' "Onion Man", "Miss Death" and "Mr. Mist". The latter named most especially. To bring an invisible man into a detective story is surely a most illogical proceeding. Detective stories are built on fact, character and background — often exaggerated admittedly. But pseudo science has no place. Also among my dislikes were Krock Kelk and Janssen The Moonsleyer. Two very weak characters.

To be continued.

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY - 1946

Third Series 111 - 134.

111.	The Riddle Of The Indian Alibi.	Anthony Parsons.
112.	Fourteen Yesrs After.	John Hunter.
113.	The Wimbledon Common Trap.	John Hunter.
114.	The Tenant of No. 13.	Lewis Jackson.
115.	The Case Of The Prince's Prisoners.	Anthony Parsons.
116.	The Case Of The Fraternising Soldier.	John Hunter.
117.	The Mystery Of 250,000 Rupees.	Anthony Parsons.
118.	The Case Of The Defaulting Sailor.	John Hunter.
119.	The Case Of The Fatal Souvenir.	Lewis Jackson.
120.	The Mystery Of Three Demobbed Men.	Walter Tyrer.
121.	The Case Of The Missing G.I. Bride.	Anthony Parsons.
122.	Down East!	Lewis Jackson.
123.	The Red Van Mystery.	Gilbert Chester.
124.	The Man Who Had To Quit.	Anthony Parsons.
125.	The Mystery of Moat Farm.	John Hunter.
126.	The Case Of The Night Lorry Driver.	Lewis Jackson.
127.	The Case Of The Swindler's Stooge.	Anthony Parsons.
128.	The Mystery Of The Double Burglary.	Gilbert Chester.
129.	The Woman With A Record.	Lewis Jackson.
130.	The Man From Chungking.	Rex Hardinge.
131.	The Crime On The Moors.	Walter Tyrer.
132.	The Mystery Of The Bankrupt Estate.	Anthony Parsons.
133.	The Case Of Lord Greyburn's Son.	Derek Long.
134.	The Yank Who Came Back.	Anthony Parsons.

——oOo——

York Library shows Dick Barton has a long ancestral line

WHAT an ancestral line the celebrated Dick Barton can boast! And how humdrum are his exploits compared with those of his predecessors—the heroes of the "penny dreadfuls" and "halfpenny marvels" of our boyhood days. No drugs or gases for them. Oh no! Nothing more subtle than an axe about the head of a dagger between the ribs.

A flashback to those gory days comes with a new exhibition in York Public Library this week. A large collection of "bloods" dating back to the 1860's has been lent by Mr. Herbert Leckenby.

Mr. Leckenby's interest in this type of fiction was founded during long hours of duty at a switchboard during the war. He began to correspond with enthusiasts the world over and now gets 40 letters a week on his hobby.

Here, looking as cold and lifeless behind the glass showcase as specimen butterflies are some of the magazines which carried those thrilling tales of action and intrigue. All the heroes are here—Buffalo Bill, Deadwood Dick, Nelson Lee, the "Saint", Raffles, Jack Harkaway, and so on.

Dick Turpin stories

SEVERAL Dick Turpin stories figure in the collection. One is about the Dark Deeds of Paris, but another called Black Bess, or the Knight of the Road, which extends over 2,012 pages and into 3,000,000 words, is a little nearer home for it reaches its climax in York.

If that sounds a lot of words wait until you reach the Sexton Blake section. Since he was launched into his career of detection on 20 December, 1893, Blake has been the hero of 3,000 stories told in 200,000,000 words. And he is still going strong.

The schoolboy stories were less gruesome, but just as popular. On show at the exhibition are copies of the "Magnet" with the ageless Bill Bunter, and of that "Penny Popular" with Harry Wharton, Tom Merry, Jimmy Silver, and their respective companies.

Interesting oddments

OTHER interesting oddments include an article by a gentleman named Ion Keith Falconer, of the Vicarage, Hitchin, who set out to ride from London to York on a bicycle and hoped to complete the journey in 24 hours. After 90 miles cycling his enthusiasm waned. When he reached York he was riding on a train which he had boarded at Stamford.

There is one of the weekly parts of a pirated version of Dickens's "Pickwick Papers" and another item of interest is a copy of the first boys' magazine to appear in colour—that was Boys of the Empire, and it came out in 1888.

It is noticeable that the titles of the magazines have changed their general theme quite frequently over the years. Towards the end of the last century, for instance, they were going through a bout of patriotism—Young Briton, Sons of the British Empire, and Sons of Britannia were typical of the titles the "bloods" bore in those days. Early in the recent war it was noticed that the "Britons" became the "War Tarriers" and the writers played their imagination on violence of a more scientific kind. The "bloods" did not fail to reflect the times.

Tantalising

THE most tantalising part about this exhibition is that some of the magazines lie open behind the protecting glass. A colleague who became completely engrossed in a chapter describing the efforts of a young lady to escape from a horrible monster, reached the bottom of a page just as the beast was on her. Just as he was about to lift the glass and turn the page over he spotted the arthritic card "Please do not touch." Being an obedient fellow he will never know what fate befell her.

Left: Extract from "The Newcastle Sunday Sun"; 23.1.49.

Exhibition Unique

In the war years, Mr. Herbert Leckenby, telephone operator, somewhere in his fifties, looked round for a powerful antidote to 18 hours non-stop duty at his switchboard. He found it in the study of "bloods" and "penny dreadfuls."

Now the postman delivers at least 40 letters a week on the subject to his home in Herbert Street, Hull Road, York. His correspondents—mostly middle-aged—live in every part of Britain and overseas. In return he circulates a special digest magazine giving all the latest news on boys' magazines.

The popular exhibition of "bloods" and "penny dreadfuls"—believed to be first of its kind—opened last week in York Public Library, was Mr. Leckenby's idea. He has lent nearly 400 boys' magazines dating from early Victorian days.

Says the librarian, Mr. R. Doherty: "The exhibition is the most successful we have ever held at the public library."

Above: From "Yorkshire Gazette" 21st June, 1949.