THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 96. DECEMBER, 1954 PRICE 1s.6d

The One & Only

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Drawn specially for C.D. by C.H. Chapman February 1952

The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 8. No. 96. Price 1s.6d.

DECEMBER, 1954
Editor, HERBERT LECKENBY
c/o YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES,
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From the Editor's Chair

WISHING ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE
BROTHERHOOD OF HAPPY HOURS AT HOME
AND OVERSEAS A REAL JOLLY CHRISTMAS
AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

THE EIGHTH YEAR ENDS: Here I am again looking back on still another eventful year in our history. Yes it's been an eventful one and a sad one for King Death has called on more of our members than in any one year before; we are poorer by the loss of Peard Sutherland, Jack Munro, Harry Stables and Joseph Parks. Maybe they have met across the Great Divide and found the others of our clan who earlier passed on.

As for myself, six months ago I was sent into retirement. Retirement! Why I seem to be busier than ever, somehow or other. I'd better not say too much about that though or H.M. Government will be thinking I didn't earn that modest pension they gave me. Anyway, highlights of the year have been meeting two of our Australian friends and the British ones with whom I have wandered through the ancient streets of York and, of course, there was my annual pilgrimage to London. If that hadn't happened I should have been writing this review with a sad heart.

Despite the inevitable losses, I am glad to say the circulation of our little magazine has not fallen for several new friends have joined us. And I am sure all will agree that the improvement in the appearance of the mag. has been maintained thanks to the York Duplicating Services.

Now, this is No. 96, so a little calculation will tell you that next April there will appear on the cover, in big figures probably, No. 100. We simply must mark that outstanding event with a bumper number. Well as soon as the Annual is out of the

way we must really get down to it. No. 100! Proud, happy thought but if it hadn't been for a band of grand, loyal helpers, there might never have been a No. 10. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you all.

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LAST APPEAL: By the time these lines appear, the Annual will be well on its way towards completion. Once again there will be more pages than the year before. At the moment of writing, nearly thirty of those I look upon as regulars had not actually ordered. I chanced it and allowed for a copy for each when I placed my order. I am sure they won't let me down but it would be better for my peace of mind if they assured me I had done right. Naturally, I don't want to have any left on my hands.

Of one thing I can assure you – its going to be as last year, a superb example of duplicating.

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THE HARRY STABLES' COLLECTION: I had hoped to tell you something this month about the sorting out of the big collection left by our greatly missed colleague of the Northern O.B.B.C. but owing to pressure on space, it will have to be held over until next month. Elsewhere in this issue however you will find an advert. giving details of papers for sale, at very reasonable prices. Even though Harry did not possess many Hamilton papers or those appealing to Leeites, there's a big variety. We cannot possibly send out lists of numbers, but if you will give us some idea of what you require, we will oblige if we possibly can.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

WANTED: Magnet containing map of Greyfriars and district. Or copy of the map alone. M. ENGLAND, 2 HIGH ST., PRESTEIGNE-UPON-LUGG, RADNORSHIRE.

Excellent Condition: 6 Volumes CHUMS ANNUALS August 1900 to August 1906. 5 Volumes BOYS OWN PAPER October 1899 to September 1901 and October 1902 to September 1905. Best Offers. GREEN, 10A ELLA ROAD, WEST BRIDGFORD, NOTTINGHAM.

WANTED: SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY (First and Second Series Only) Your Price paid for good copies. Serial Numbers and Series to: JOSEPHINE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by Josephine Packman
27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

I have had quite a busy time during the past few weeks - including a Sexton Blake Circle Meeting (the details will be found in this issue), a lot of correspondence and the preparation of Blakiana - but I enjoy all of it.

One of my correspondents, Mr. E.V. Hughes, has most kindly sent me two ½d. Union Jacks containing instalments of "Griff, the Man Tracker", the subject of Mr. Leckenby's article in last month's Blakiana. They make most interesting reading, particularly as one of them is the very first instalment. I have an idea that my two instalments, together with Mr. Leckenby's and Walter Webb's (I know he has some, if not all) would complete the whole story. This would be no mean feat, considering they were published close on 54 years ago!

Thanks to Mr. Leckenby, part one of Walter Webb's article "Sexton Blake on the Films" is not being 'split' as was at first thought necessary on account of space. It is very good of him, for I do not like breaking the continuity of an article. However, I must try and keep Blakiana down to the number of pages allotted me, or else I can see 'Herbert' really ticking me off!

Further to our editor's mention of the 100th number of the Collector's Digest (October '54 issue), I understand there is a possibility of there being a 'special issue'. No doubt Mr. Leckenby will have more to say on the matter in due course, but in any case I can promise you that Blakiana will have something extra special. I cannot say much about it at the moment, except that it will be 'most revealing' and 'light shedding' on an old-time popular Union Jack and Sexton Blake Library character.

Finally, I take this opportunity of wishing all my readers a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

JOSEPHINE PACKMAN.

SEXTON BLAKE ON THE FILMS — By WALTER WEBB

PART ONE.....THE SILENT DAYS

Make a note of all the films which have brought the

character of Sexton Blake to the screen, endeavour to select just one which was worth the time, trouble and expense of producing, and the result of such an undertaking must inevitably be a negative shaking of the head. To say that those Blake films were poor is to understate; they ranged from mediocrity to rank bad productions and were, with hardly an exception, an insult to the intelligence o the average film-goer. Situations which were supposed to be thrilling and were intended to make audiences grip their seats with suspence only brought involuntary laughter, for some of the attempt to build up an atmosphere of tension and excitement were so crude that the results achieved were quite absurd. Maybe the Hollywood offerings of the Sherlock Holmes films they produced were not extraordinary examples of cinematographic achievements, but they were super-productions compared to the sorry efforts of British producers who sought to boost Sexton Blake in the same medium.

The dismal record began just before the commencement of the first world war when, on 6 April 1914, a three-reel film called THE CLUE OF THE WAX VESTA was generally released for showing. It was adapted from the first few Yvonne stories, and "stills" from the film were reproduced in the pages of the UNION JACK and PLUCK by an enthusiastic editor who urged his readers to get in touch with thei local cinema manager at once and request him to show the film; for according to him, the production was a hit which every Sexton Blak fan should not miss. But the enraptured editor's opinion was not shared by all his readers, some of whom wrote and told him so in no uncertain manner, one indignant follower going so far as to say tha if the rest were going to be like that he would not go and see them The editor's excuses in the face of these criticisms were somewhat lame; he pointed out that several drawbacks were encountered with this first film, one being that they were strange to the art of filming their stories, and another that it was acted abroad. Seeing that quite a lot of the action in the Yvonne stories did take place abroad a puzzled Blake fan might quite naturally ask what that had to do with it!

The second Blake film was generally released for exhibition on 7 September 1914, and was entitled THE MYSTERY OF THE DIAMOND BELT. It featured George Marsden Plummer, a very popular bad character of that period. Once again the editor boosted the film for all he was worth, emphasising the fact that this second Sexton Blake film was superior to the first by reason of the fact that it

was produced in London by the finest producer in England – Mr. Charles Raymond. But, by all accounts, the film was not considered to by anything out of the ordinary, for the critics gave it a cool reception – if they bothered to mention it at all! Sexton Blake was played by Mr. Philip Kay; Tinker by the UNION JACK editor, Mr. Lewis Carlton; George Marsden Plummer by Mr. Douglas Payne; and Kitty the Moth by Miss Eve Balfour. The story of the film, written by Lewis Carlton, appeared in serial form in the Boys' Journal, commencing in the issue dated 17 October, 1914.

Title of the third Sexton Blake film, distributed on this occasion by Messrs. Walturdaw & Co. Ltd., was called BRITAIN'S SECRET TREATY, and it commenced its rounds of the halls during the first week of the first world war, and was adapted from the UNION JACK story by Andrew Murray – THE CASE OF THE GERMAN ADMIRAL, featuring the Hon. John Lawless.

Following immediately upon this was the film THE STOLEN HEIRLOOMS. Next in line was John William Bobin's story, entitled THE COUNTERFEITERS, which was released during the last week in November, 1915 and featured the popular characters, Ezra Q. Maintland and Broadway Kate, and, of course, Sexton Blake and Tinker, working in co-operation with Detective-Inspector Martin, of Scotland Yard. This film was produced by the Davidson Film Company.

In those days films were still in the experimental stage, and it was the stars of the American film who filled the cinemas in the days of the early Sexton Blake offerings – the hilariously funny antics of the Keystone Cops, the Mack Sennett comedies, in which were featured the mirth-provoking antics of Mack Swain, Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle, Slim Summerville, Ben Turpin, Chester Conklin – and the most famous of them all – Charlie Chaplin.

But if there was one who outstripped even those established favourites in popularity it was Pearl White, uncrowned Queen of the Serial Film, who had a tremendous following and whose exploits brought never-to-be-forgotten thrills to millions, old and young alike. Never were Saturday afternoons looked so eagerly forward to by the youth of that generation – never were pennies so promptly parted with at cinema pay-boxes by wildly excited and happy youngsters as on those occasions when a serial featuring the incomparable Pearl White was being shown at the local. The printed adventures of Sexton Blake, Jack, Sam and Pete, Tom Merry & Co. Harry Wharton & Co, Tom Sayers, Nelson Lee and other heroes, were forgotten on those thrilling occasions – UNION JACKS, PLUCKS, MARVELS, BOYS'

FRIENDS, REALMS, HERALDS, MAGNETS, GEMS etc., were temporarily cast aside, for, whereas they could be perused at leisure the Pearl White episode was no longer available after the Saturday showing.

Against the sustained thrills of the American serial the Sexton Blake film had little to offer, and how puny a figure did the screen Sexton Blake compare with the virile young woman of the former! Pearl White was tall, blonde, well-built and, if not exactly beautiful, remarkably good-looking, with dark expressive eyes. Most exciting and the best of all her serials was The Exploits of Elaine, which surviving readers of the old boys' papers may remember was shown throughout the country in the year 1915, and was written by Arthur B. Reeve, the American author. It featured Sexton Blake's counterpart in the States, Craig Kennedy, the scientific detective, a part played by Arnold Daly, a stocky not-so-young actor; Creighton Hall played the role of Jameson, a newspaper reporter and friend of Kennedy, and Pearl White was, of cour, Elaine. Fifteen episodes of continual thrills, with Pearl White being stalked throughout the whole film by a fearsome-looking individual, known as The Clutching Hand, who with his face practically concealed by a handkerchief and with a paralysed hand bent in a perpetual clutch, must have chilled the blood of the hardiest film-goer. Mr. Reece, of the Criminals' Confederation, one of the most malevolent, black-hearted and double-dyed villians in fiction, was a patron saint compared to him!

Could the Sexton Blake films have given even half the entertainment the Pearl White serials did they would be remembered today with the same affection, instead of which they are forgotten, and deservedly so. Acting in the Blake films was often stilted and poor, for most of the players seemed camera-conscious, a defect entirely lacking in Pearl White and her company, whose performances were natural and smooth. And how Pearl White could act! The expression of sheer terror which distorted her attractive features as Sheldon Lewis, playing the part of Perry Bennett, the crooked lawyer, transformed himself gradually into The Clutching Hand before her eyes has not since been surpassed for stark realism.

Seeing this very attractive and most assertive young woman being lassoed from a galloping horse by outlaws hiding in a tree; tightly bound and lowered head-downwards into a large tank, or vat, containing some sort of liquid which sizzled and steamed like lava from a volcano; running and swaying along the roof of a swiftly-moving locomotive; or being pulled into the air clinging frantically to the trailing-rope of a balloon, it was not surprising that

a marked change should be observed in the character of the heroine in the Sexton Blake stories. Hitherto they had been of the fragile, cringing, timid type of female, who were likely to swoon into the arms of their husbands, or lovers, at the merest suggestion of danger, but the advent of such heroines of the screen like the fabulous Pearl White and Ruth Roland brought about their rapid demise, and they were superseded by the more adventurous and glamorous type, such as Yvonne, Fifette, Marie Galante, Ysabel de Ferre and several others. Mark Osborne, in one of the best Sexton Blake stories he ever wrote – THE WORKINGS OF CHANCE (Union Jack No. 536, dated 17 January 1941) – went so far as to introduce a woman who combined strength with beauty - who could bend an ordinary poker easily with her own bare hands – a feminine Eugene Sandow, in fact!

The war resulted in the suspension of several other planned Sexton Blake productions, and also caused enforced changes to be made in the editorial departments of the various boys' papers. L.H. Pratt was deposed temporarily in the "Sexton Blake Library" by the youthful William Home-Gall, son of the old writer of the same name, who wrote as Reginald Wray, and Thomas Burke took over the "Boys Realm". The latter was to become famous soon afterwards as the author of "Limehouse Nights", which provided the foundation for the highly successful D.W. Griffith's film, "Broken Blossoms". Trevor C. Wignall, who wrote one or two Sexton Blake's and created a Japenese detective named Saburo, thereby anticipating Charlie Chan, used to wander all over London with Burke while the latter collected material for "Limehouse Nights". Together they traipsed for many months about the great city, Burke with his dog-eared manuscript under his arm, but failing to find a publisher.

William J. Elliott, another casual Sexton Blake writer, was also busy in the film world during this period and his name was to be seen in the credit-titles as the writer of the scenario in several British productions. For example, he wrote the scenario of the big production of Charles Dickens' "Bleak House", which Maurice Elvey produced in 1919, with Constance Collier in the role of Lady Deadlock. He was also responsible for the scenario of George R. Sims' famous drama of London life, "The Ever Open Door", distributed by Ideal Films Ltd., in 1920.

The next Sexton Blake film, completed by Harry Loraine for Gaumont, was trade shown at the New Gallery Kinema on 14 August 1919, and was entitled "The Further Exploits of Sexton Blake –

the Mystery of the s.s. Olympic". Filming took place around the Liverpool docks and a good deal of the action occured on board the liner. An interesting fact is that when the film was being produced the Olympic was still a troopship. The producer, however, desired to reproduce faithfully some of the cabin interiors which consisted of some very fine and expensive panelling. This panelling had been taken out of the Olympic early in the war and stored, and to help Mr. Loraine to get his settings correct, the owners of the Olympic courteously allowed him to bring the actual panelling down to London to be set up in the studio, in order to make a faithful replica of the cabin on board the vessel. The story of the film was written specially by Robert Murray for copy in the "Union Jack", and was published in issue No. 857 under the same title as the film.

Several years elapsed before the next series of Sexton Blake films went into production. Then, in 1928 Captain George Banfield, of British Filmcraft Ltd., set to work on a number of two-reelers with Langhorne Burton in the role of Sexton Blake, and Mickey Brantford playing the part of Tinker. Title of the first film in the series was THY MUSTERY OF THE SILENT DEATH, and this was followed immediately by SILKEN THREADS. Number three was called THE GREAT OFFICE MYSTERY, and the remaining three, making six in all were entitled as follows: BLAKE THE LAWBREAKER; SEXTON BLAKE, GAMBLER and THE CLUE OF THE SECOND GOBLET, which featured George Marsden Plummer. All six films were adapted from stories published in the "Union Jack", and distributed at a time when silent films were on the way out, for the "talkies" had already captured public fancy following the miracle of the first part-talking film, "The Jazz Singer" in which the voice of Al Jolson was heard in British cinemas for the first time. These Sexton Blake films were widely distrubuted and compared to those which had gone before were not too bad, but they did nothing to enhance the reputation of Mr. Langhorne Burton, a most accomplished actor.

Such is the dismal record of Sexton Blake on the silver screen - not one really worth-while production covering a period of fourteen years, which was a striking contrast to the American offerings of their own fictional detectives such as Nick Carter, Craig Kennedy, Ellery Queen, and one or two others who appeared in some quite inexpensive but really thrilling films. By the year 1930 it was obvious that the sound film had come to stay, and this gave British producers an opportunity to make some amends for their

lamentable failures in the silent era, for in the not-so-distant future plans were to be put into operation whereby Sexton Blake was to go on the track again. This time, however, there would be a big difference, for the sort he was to be put on was in opposition to anything he had ever embarked on before - the sound-track of the all-talking film.

(End of Part One)

REPORT OF SEXTON BLAKE CIRCLE MEETING, HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 1954 at 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

Those in attendance were Charlie Wright, Ben Whiter, Bill Lofts, Harry Homer, Rex Dolphin, Len and Josie Packman.

It was very nice to see Harry Homer once again in the chair.

In opening the meeting the chairman thanked all members of the Circle for carrying on so well during such time as he is abroad. The absence of Norton Price through the illness of his wife was greatly regretted, but the appearance of Rex Dolphin once again was very pleasing. The chairman then read over the work done for the C.D. Annual this year, in addition to which we have in hand the work of Gilbert Chester and Donald Stuart for the 1955 Annual.

It was proposed by Harry Homer and seconded by Len Packman, that Mr. W. Colcombe no longer be considered a member of the Circle, in view of the fact that the last three letters to him from the Secretary have reamined unanswered. The proposal was carried unanimously.

The financial report was read and accepted.

Proposed by Ben Whiter and seconded by Harry Homer, in view of the fine work on Sexton Blake done by Mr. Walter Webb, he be invited in the Circle as an honorary member. The proposal was carried unanimously.

The venue of the next meeting will be at Charlie Wright's residence: 12 Ashburnham Place, Greenwich, London, S.E.10., on Sunday, 30 January, 1955.

C. WRIGHT, (Secretary).

NOTE: Since the above meeting took place, Walter Webb has written to say he is pleased to accept the invitation.

J. PACKMAN

HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

Last month I was telling you about the interesting letters which were appearing in the Nottingham "Evening Post" on old boys' books. Well, since then several more have appeared including one of particular interest from a member of our own circle, John Derry, 2 Ash Villas, Herbert Road, Nottingham. In it he said if anyone interested cared to get in touch with him he would be pleased to loan them Magnets, Gems or Nelson Lees. When I saw it I said to myself, "My word! John's taking something on." He was indeed, for a little later he told me he had had about 100 letters and callers! He's been kept at it ever since.

Anyway, as a result he is hoping to form a branch of the O.B.B.C. in the district. He would be grateful if any of our members in the vicinity would get in touch with him.

An interview with John, complete with photograph showing him looking at some of his collection appeared in the paper on November 10th.

More power to your elbow, John.

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You'll see from Frank Richards interesting letter that Wally Bunter is coming back - after nearly 40 years, isn't it? Older readers will have pleasant memories of that delightful series wherein, Wally, Billy's cousin and double, but oh so different in manners and ability, secretly took Billy's place at Greyfriars for a while and served up many surprises as a result.

The new Bunter Book would appear to be on similar lines. It should prove to be one of the best of the series.

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And now for reviews with a seasonable flavour from Eric Fayne and Roger Jenkins, that pair always willing to oblige.

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DO YOU REMEMBER? By ROGER M. JENKINS

No. 6 - Magnet No. 776 - "The Ghost of Mauleverer Towers".

No. 776 of the Magnet was the last occasion when the time-honoured custom of a single Christmas story was observed. It was

also the first ghost of Mauleverer Towers and the first introduction to Mauleverer's cousin, the ne'er-do-well Brian, who had just been released from a French prison, and was professing repentence.

According to the old legend, the death of a Mauleverer was portended by the movement of an old suit of armour, which the restless spirit of Sir Fulke returned to inhabit once again as he did when he was alive. Needless to say, the ghostly iron footsteps were heard once again in the Christmas of 1922, and it did not take Jack Drake long to trace the real culprit.

There were a number of interesting points about No. 776: for example, Billy Bunter telephoned D'Arcy at St. Jim's to assure him that he would not fail to visit Eastwood House for Christmas, and was surprised to learn that the St. Jim's juniors were having a baring-out at the old school over the holidays (the stories about the two schools were very well integrated in the early 'twenties). In a footnote, the editor advised Magnet readers to buy the Gem and learn more about the Christmas barring-out! Jack Drake made a second appearance in No. 776 in a Ferrers Locke story by "Owen Conquest" but it was not the master hand at work, and we need say no more. The Christmas number was rounded off by a four page edition of the Greyfriars Herald. There was, perhaps, not quite the atmosphere of the old Double Number, but nonetheless a cheerful and festive note was struck, and it cannot but be surmised that the readers of thirty-two years ago heartily enjoyed their copies of the Magnet.

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THE FIRST CHRISTMAS "GEM"

By Eric Fayne.

The Editor has asked me to write on a Gem Christmas Number. On any one of the thirty-three issues which were published to make a Merry Christmas a little merrier, a little Tom Merrier, in fact. Only one of those issues is not available for my consideration, the 1912 Double Number, "Nobody's Study", which I discussed just a year ago. So, with thirty-two numbers to choose from, my task should be easy. But it isn't!

Someone once said, "When it doubt, start at the beginning", so let us browse, just for a moment, over the Gem's very first Christmas Number. A Double Number, price One Penny, with thirty-two pages, including the blue cover.

"Tom Merry's Christmas" is what Martin Clifford called his extra-long St. Jim's story. I love that yarn, not because it is a masterpiece, but becuase it is such a jolly Christmas romp from

start to finish. It contains no plot at all, just snow, and a breaking-up for the Christmas vac, and log fires, and holly, and Christmas puddings, and skating on the frozen lake, and a party. A Christmas interlude between the plots, as it were!

There were eleven boys in Tom Merry's party at Laurel Villa, the Terrible Three, of course, with Monty at his most punning; Jack Blake, Gussy, and Herries, and Digby, who had left St. Jim's for some reason, was specially invited; and Figgins & Co. The story re-introduced Marmaduke Smythe, a character who had appeared fairly often in the "Pluck" St. Jim's stories. Marmy was at the party. So was Cousin Ethel. Miss Priscilla presided over the fun and games, ably assisted by her venerable maid, Hannah. Mr. Dodds, the curate of Huckleberry Heath came in on Christmas night. And that was the lot.

A jolly little spree at Laurel Villa, before the chums started their yearly parties at Eastwood House - parties which became so large and overgrown with the passing years that the old favourites were almost lost in the crush - and it must have taken a dozen Christmas puddings to feed them all. It was to be thirty-two years before the Tom Merry company had another Christmas Day at Laurel Villa, in the very last Christmas Number of the Gem.

That very first Christmas Number was published on November 13th, 1907. For many years the Gem was always very premature in its celebration of Christmas. Perhaps that is why there wasn't much merry Christmas spirit in those early Christmas numbers. But there was plenty in this one, and the lads of the village in 1907 must have loved it.

There wasn't much else, apart from the Tom Merry story. And who wanted much more? Just a short instalment of the Clarke Hook serial, "Tempest Headland". J. Abney Cummings drew the Yuletide cover, showing Fatty Wynn with a turkey on his head.

Let Martin Clifford himself finish the story, just as he did in 1907.

"A crash of bells from the village church warned the dancers that Christmas Eve was giving place to Christmas morning. Mr. Dodds threw open a window, and the joyous sound of the bells floated in. Then came a nearer sound - the sound of voices in song. From the dim, snowy night the carol, and it sank into the hearts of those who heard: "Peace on earth, good-will to men". And with what better words can we close our tale of Tom Merry's Christmas".

POPULAR PERSONALITIES, No. 8. (Second Series)

By ERIC FAYNE

BILLY BUNTER:

The fattest and most famous schoolboy in the world is really to large to have his personality potted. He has played his part in the Greyfriars Story from Magnet No. 1, and the few stories in which he has not appeared could almost be counted on the fingers of our hands. Furthermore, as every Magnet reader knows, his character has changed considerably over the years, and falls into several phases. In very early days he was just a very simple, friendly fat boy; as the red-cover vanished into history and the white cover went on its way he became sly, treacherous, and dishonest, and by the time the nineteen-twenties were reached he was a despicable young villain with few, if any, redeeming qualities. He was at his most repulisve in the fine "HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL" series of 1924-5, and the same greedy villainy was much in evidence in the famous Congo series. Even the popular BUNTER COURT series, though it was in lighter vein and very entertaining, showed Bunter as more suitable for Borstal than for Greyfriars.

But as the nineteen-twenties drew towards their end, Billy's character was subtly modified. He was no longer the villain of the piece; he became strictly honest, apart from food; he became the supremely lovable "old fat man" who means so much to all of Frank Richards' admirers. Though it is true that by the time we found Bunter "billionairing" he had lost again some of the most endearing qualities of the early "thirties", he has never sunk again to the level of the treacherous little snob we knew in the Magnet's middle history.

Thousands of episodes could be listed with Billy Bunter as the central figure. As the proprietor of WHIFFLES' CIRCUS, in the best of all the circus series; as the "FORM MASTER'S FAVOURITE" in the superb Courtfield Cracksman series; as "BUNTER, THE BULLY" in the Professor Sparkinson series; trying to kow-tow to the Mandarin Tang Wang, in the CHINA SERIES; terror-stricken, yet defeating Soames, in the brilliant Redwing-South Seas Series; saving the situation in the India series; "DUMB BUNTER", "BLIND BUNTER", "DEAF BUNTER", "BLACK BUNTER", the latter in a jewel of a yarn when he became film-struck.

In my own opinion, the finest character picture of the Owl is to be found in the "FLIP" series, when the waif of the Second

Form made a hero of the fat boy, and refused to see any wrong in him. "Master Bunter is such a splendid feller!"

I have picked out the pearls from the jewel-box, but if you like to look in earlier there is Bunter reforming twice under the plump spell of CORA QUELCH; Bunter as "VISCOUNT BUNTER", adopting Gussy's famous lisp; Bunter going to St. Jim's under the name of his COUSIN WALLY. And should you have come in later in the programm you will recall Bunter playing into the hands of his rascally relative, CARTER, or masquerading as "GRUNTER OF GREYHURST", not to mention all the fine Bunter Books of recent years.

To wind up, let us leave it to Frank Richards to give us a pen-picture of Bunter - as only Frank can:-

"Bunter was in imaginative fellow. Like most imaginative fellows, he lived in a little world of his own, that only approximated roughly to the real world. Ordinary life was not interestin enough for Bunter. Things that really happened interested him little. This gift of imagination might have made him, with a littl more brains, a poet, an author, a journalist, or a politician - in fact, any kind of dealer in fiction. Unfortunately, Bunter lacked brains. His powerful imagination had made him into nothing but a reckless fibber, whose fibs never carried conviction.

It was this curious trait in Bunter's character that caused the suburban villa where the Bunters lived to blossom forth, in Bunter's fertile fancy, into Bunter Court, and his father's old Ford into a Rolls Royce, and his relatives into members of the peerage.

Like many fellows who tell fibs over and over again, Bunter came to believe in them, more or less, himself - much more, at least than anyone else believed in them. Sometimes, going home for the holidays, he had quite a shock at seeing Bunter Court dwindle into a suburban villa, and the Rolls Royce into a dusty, creaking Ford.

Greatly Bunter preferred his imaginary world to the real one"

Thank you, Frank Richards, for giving us Billy Bunter to brighten up our lives. You've done us proud!

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MAGNET TITLES (Cont'd): 1345. Alonzo the Great; 1346. The Greyfriars Hercules; 1347. The Reformer of the Remove; 1348. Bunter the Bully; 1349. The Mystery of Wharton Lodge; 1350. The Ghost of Wharton Lodge; 1351. Bunter the Masher; 1352. Billy Bunter's Diamond; 1353. The Profiteer of the Remove; 1354. Kidnapped from the Air; 1355. The Mystery of the Vaults.

THE HARRY STABLES' COLLECTION

FOR SALE: Boys' Friend Library, 1st Series: No. 36. "Football Fortune" (Charles Hamilton 5/-; No. 46. "Rivals of St. Kits" (Charles Hamilton) 5/-; other 1st series (3d.) 4/6; (4d.) 3/-. Schoolboys Own Libraries; Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rookwood, 2/6 each: other Hamiltons 1/6 each: non-Hamiltons 1/- each. Odd numbers Magnets and Gems, 1916-40; 2/- to 1/3 each. Hinton's "School & Sport" No. 1-24, 25/- the lot. Sexton Blake Libraries, 3rd series, after No. 100, 5d. each, 4/- dozen. Union Jack (A.P. 1903) No.1 2/6; Nos. 2 and 3 1/6 each. Young Britains, 9d. each; Chatterbox Annual 1916, 7/6. For the above, apply to GERALD ALLISON, 7 SUMMERFIELD GARDENS, BRAMLEY, LEEDS, 13.

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Many volumes Chums 7/6; B.O.P's. 6/-; Young England 6/-; Scout 6/-; Boys of Our Empire (Melrose) 3 vols. 6/- each. Plus postage. For the above, apply to either G.A. or H.L.

AVAILABLE: Magnets, 1918-40; Gems, 1917-40; Union Jacks, 1905-30; Nelson Lees, 1924-33; Holiday Annuals, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1931; Sexton Blake Libs. 2nd and 3rd series; Modern Boys; Rovers; Adventures; Pilots; Robin Hoods (Aldine); Buffalo Bill (Aldine) 1914-30; Young Britains; Sexton Blake Annuals; Populars, 1917-22; Marvels, 1916-21; Sibly's Astrology 1796, nearly 1500 pages, scores of plates £5; 60 numbers similar items, Collectors' Digests; Captains; B.O.P.; Black and White; S.O. Libs.; Wide Worlds; etc. etc. Satisfaction guaranteed. S.A.E. please. Pre-1935 Sexton Blakes and pre-1918 Nelson Lee's required. Good prices paid. RONALD ROUSE, 3 ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE, GAS HILL, NORWICH.

****

Nelson Lee Column

By JACK WOOD
NOSTAW, 328 Stockton Lane
York.

Once again the Christmas season is almost upon us with its feast of good things present and to come, and its happy memories of the past. Seated before a warm fire with the curtains drawn and the lights shaded, it is not too difficult to find oneself transported in spirit to those unforgetable Christmases past. Let Edwy Searles Brooks recall one of them for you in his Nugget Weekly story of .....

THE SPECTRE OF FENNING HOLLOW

" "This", said Nipper decisively, "has put the lid on it." There was a certain amount of truth in his words, for the predicament which Nelson Lee and Nipper found themselves in was not exactly a pleasant one. It was getting on towards evening, dusk was already beginning to fall. And something far more solid than dusk was falling too - snow. Millions of flakes whirled down on every hand - thick, icy flakes which settled everywhere."

The famous couple were on their way to spend Xmas at the country home of one of their distinguished clients after their stirring time in protecting the Kent Crusaders from Zingrave and the Green Triangle. The detective and his young assistant become snowbound, and leaving their two-seater stranded in a deep drift, plod tiredly through the deepening snow and the chilly darkness. Eventually they arrive at the cosy, homely, Miller's Arms at the isolated village of Fenning Hollow.

At the Miller's Arms, Lee and Nipper meet a mysterious resident, Col. Barrett, who talks them into accepting a wager to

spend some time in a reputedly haunted derelict house in the village. The ghost is that of an old woman, murdered some 50 years previously, and said to "walk" each night in Xmas week.

Although the detective and his assistant do not believe in ghosts, one can hardly blame them if they felt a few qualms as they approached the "old, dilapidated dwelling. It was not particularly large, but it had evidently been deserted for many, many years. High, guant trees surrounded the place, and the roof, in places, was torn away, revealing the naked rafters."

As they enter a rear corridor, they see something and are attacked, but Lee captures the "ghost" who turns out to be Col. Barrett, whom the detective had recognised as a leading Triangle agent.

Partly because the village is miles from civilisation, Lee decided to let his prisoner go, but he adds, " "I'll give you this one chance to get away. You attempted to kill both Nipper and myself, but I will forget that just for this once - for it is Christmas time, and a period of goodwill"

"The Green Triangle man uttered a gasp. "By thunder, Lee, you're a white man. You're white right through." "

And so ended an interim episode in a long campaign which was soon to be intensified by Jim the Penman joining forces with the League.

And here let me interpolate a brief introduction from the pen of Charles Churchill to the one and only.....

ZINGRAVE!!

In the pre-St. Frank's era of the Nelson Lee Library, we read of many adversaries of Nelson Lee and Nipper. Most of them were duly disposed of in one story, but a small number popped up again from time to time to renew conclusions with the pair from Gray's Inn Road.

Outstanding in this small select band of rogues was Professor Cyrus Zingrave. Now here was a man possessing intellect of a high order, a scientist with a crooked streak which turned him into a criminal of utter ruthlessness and a formidable opponent of law and order. As to his appearance, how can I better the description of E.S.E. which appeared in N.L.L. No. 23 of the old series in which we were introduced to him?

"The professor's voice was wonderfully musical, and it had

a silky, gentle tone about it that was almost irresistable. Zingrave's personality, in fact, was a remarkable one, and Clifford knew that he would have to steel himself to the utmost to avoid being won over. The professor seemed to possess uncanny powers over his fellow beings, and could, without in the least appearing to, convince them against their own judgement and inclinations.

He was a small man, but an imposing one, nevertheless. His shoulders drooped a little, and upon them was set one of the most remarkable heads Clifford had ever seen. Clean-shaven, his skin was almost dead white. Not a spot of colour relieved his cheeks, and his brow was high and massive - the brow of a genious. But it was the eyes which held Clifford's attention - which seemed to grip the young man in a grasp of fascination. They were large and absolutely black, piercing and commanding."

Clifford, let me explain, was a young man who had been imprisoned by the League of the Green Triangle for five years on a remote island. He escaped and formed an alliance with Nelson Lee, an alliance which ultimately brought about the downfall of the League. Zingrave, however, managed to evade the clutches of the Law, and some time after appeared again in the N.L.L., this time at the head of a fresh gang of criminals calling themselves the "Circle of Terror".

This fresh series lasted well into the St. Frank's days and although Zingrave's activities were regularly blunted by Nelson Lee and Nipper, the imfamous professor continued to put in appearances from time to time over the course of many years.

Nelson Lee had many series of tussles with other rogues, such as the Black Wolf, Mortimer Crane, Jim the Penman, etc., but none of them ever lasted so long, nor were as full of thrills and dangers as the battles of wits he fought against Professor Cyrus Zingrave.

***

To return, however, to the individual story, the story which is divorced from a more familiar series and the type of story which Brooks tackled very ably from time to time. Our old friend James Cook reminds us of one of these stories in:-

TREASURE TROVE!

Much has been written about the stories in The "Nelson Lee" from the 'series' angle, but every now and again there would

appear a solitary gem to outshine in brilliance the scintillating richness of the yarns which, because of their length, ran on for a few weeks. These jewels from the St. Frank's treasure house should certainly be among the collection of the loyal and true Nelson Lee enthusiast.

Taking one of these precious 'stories' out of the casket, I will outline the superb tale which only Brooks could write. It is called, "WHEN A BOY'S DOWN", No. 390, dated November 25th, 1922.

When you look inside it's first page you notice there is an alternative title - there often was - "or, THE SENSATION OF THE VILLAGE."

Then the editorial summary which states - "a Splendid Long Complete Story of School Life and Detective Adventure, with a Strong Human Interest. Introduces Softy Wade, a New Character; Nelson Lee as the Famous Schoolmaster Detective; Nipper, the Leader of the Remove; and the Well-Known Juniors of St. Frank's College."

(The Narrative Related Throughout by Nipper).

How cosy and smooth were the editors of those days! And how refreshing.

Then the story opens up with "Shame!". Many of the yarns by Brooks, Hamilton and others have probably begun their journey with this sorrowful word, but only E.S.B. knew how to maintain this pathetic cry - this synonym for disgrace - right through and really make it moisten the eyes.

"When a Boy's Down" is a simple little tale about a farmer's boy who was by no means unhandsome. He was well set up, with good muscles and had a head of fair, curly hair. His features were well formed. But of spirit he seemed to possess no trace.

And the story starts with the farmer's boy, Charles Wade (who was called Softy Wade, because it was generally admitted in the village that he was not quite all there!) endeavouring to guide an ordinary garden barrow which was filled to overflowing with a supply of very healthy turnips. Standing all around him were numbers of village boys, and in front of him the "Kids Terror" one Lumpy Bill, the village bully. We all know the Lumpy Bills of this world and this one was no different.

Over went the barrow and the turnips went flying over the road in every direction. Fullwood & Co. were passing at that precise moment on their cycles.

Fullwood getting ready to dismount hit a turnip with his

front wheel and the elegant leader of Study A went over with a fearful crash into a muddy puddle.

Edwy Searles Brooks really excelled himself when describing village scenes and what followed is a masterpiece. Farmer Holt who employs Softy Wade is remarkable for his cruelty to the boy. But when a solicitor from London interviews Wade and tells him he has been left £12,000, the story soars into greater heights. Nelson Lee acts as the boy's guardian since Softy has no parents, and soon after this Fullwood gets a wheeze.

Now Study A housed a really bad lot and I was very surprised when Brooks reformed Fullwood, because Ralph Leslie I thought was beyond redemption.

But as his successors Gore-Pearce and Forrest were the limit in rascality to anyone's imagination, the change was justified.

Teddy Long joins Fullwood in trying to relieve Softy Wade of some of his spending money, but Fullwood soon drops that for a bigger scheme. Instead he joins up with Farmer Holt who thinks Softy should have treated him better than he did. It was the bitterest pill he had ever been asked to swallow. His own farm boy - his slave for years - had refused to see him. The lad he had kicked and cuffed about to his heart's content had sent down a message that he was too busy! A diplomatic question from Fullwood and sympathy is established between the two. From then on a conversation ensues between the farmer and the schoolboy that surely raised eyebrows at Fleetway House. But Brooks was a sticker for verisimilitude and he must have raised the same eyebrows later on with the Ezra Quirke yarns and the Barry Stokes series.

To continue: Fullwood disquises himself and manages to sell Wade some investments for which Fullwood receives a cheque duly signed by Softy. But when Ralph Leslie presents it at the bank he gets the £3,000 but runs full tilt into Nelson Lee as he is coming out. Lee, of course, sees through his disguise and was well aware of the scheme. Incidentally, I cannot remember the character of Softy Wade being mentioned in later stories of the N.L.L. It is a fine story and one wonders why the loyalty towards the "Nelson Lee" petered out as it did.

But St. Frank's is not forgotten. It doesn't grace the television screens nor is it still written about by its author - but you cannot keep a good man down or a good story.

***

And on that note of nostalgia, I bid you au revour until

next month, with every good wish for Xmas and the New Year.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

LONDON SECTION: Three weeks after the very successful Sexton Blake Circle meeting, 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich was once again the venue of a very happy gathering of the club. Long distanced traveller attending was Norton Price of the complete "Sexton Blake Library" series fame. Coming up from Margate, he swelled the ranks of a very representative gathering. Indeed it must be stated that it was one of the very best meetings ever held at the home of Blakiana. The Hamilton Library report was extremely good and new purchases by the librarian, Roger Jenkins, should ensure some good winter reading for the borrowers. Apologies from the Nelson Lee librarian, Bob Blythe, for unavoidable absence were received.

As winner of last month's quiz, it fell to my lot to compile one for this meeting. Actually there were two, firstly an easy one and then a not so easy one, both mostly on Greyfriars. Ron Deacon had also compiled one, quite a good one, and the winner of all three was our tame artist, Bob Whiter.

After the competitions there was held a grand debate on the rival merits of to bind or not to bind. Roger Jenkins opened for the binders and Charlie Wright replied for the non-binders. Several other speakers gave their views and after a vote had been taken, it was announced that the binders had won by a small majority.

A fine impromptu talk by Bill Lofts followed. He gave an account of how he started to read the "Hotspur" number one at the age of ten years. Continuing he gave a good account of how he read and collected over the years right up to the present time with his grand research at the British Museum. The applause at the conclusion was very generous.

The Christmas meeting of the club will be held at "Cherry Place", Wood Green on Sunday, December 19th, 4 p.m. sharp.

And so with the best thanks of those present to the worthy hosts, LEN and JOSIE, the penultimate meeting of 1954 terminated will all of us going home our divers ways.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

* * * * * * *

NORTHERN SECTION MEETING, 239 Hyde Park Road, Leeds, November 13th 1954.

There was a good attendance including Charles Auckland of Sheffield and that stalwart Leeite, Cyril Banks of Huddersfield who can't get along as often as we would wish.

The question of the tea preceding the Christmas Party came up again. It will be partaken of at some convenient restaurant or hotel and those who intend to be present will be notified by the secretary of actual place and time in due course, possibly before these lines appear in print. A big gathering is hoped for.

Business dealt with, the company settled down to the reading by our chairman of "Bob Cherry's Romance". It was much enjoyed, and there's no doubt it will appeal to a larger circle, also, when it appears in the Annual.

Then came a couple of quizes by full of ideas Gerry Allison, "What Had They in Common" and "Right or Wrong". Jack Wood came out the winner with 15 points despite the fact that all the questions concerned Hamilton characters, and Jack claims to be a Leeite first and foremost.

As usual the Library did a thriving business.

H. LECKENBY,
Northern Section Correspondent.

***

LATER: The Tea before the Christmas Party will be at the Craven Dairies Cafe, Boar Lane at 4.30. Members will meet by the News Theatre, City Square, between 4 and 4-15 p.m.

*****

MERSEYSIDE SECTION, NOVEMBER MEETING: There was a very good attendance at this meeting, and the Chairman opened the proceedings with a welcome to two new members, Messrs. H.W. Francomb and G. Riley, whom we were very pleased to meet, and we feel sure they will be numbered among our "regulars" at future meetings.

Club and section business was then dealt with, including the reading of correspondence resulting from our recent advertisement. It is hoped that our numbers will be enlarged in the near future as the interested parties are contacted, and the response was considered satisfactory.

The chairman then outlined the entertainment programme for the December meeting; this includes the submitting by each attending

member of a piece of poetry on the hobby (self-written, of course!), a short quiz devised by Messrs. Webster and Case, and a novel competition offered by Jim Walsh, based on a story written by himself. The evening of December 12th should be very enjoyable indeed, and we look forward to it with "pleasureable anticipation".

After refreshments the company participated in another session of the "Trio Game"; needless to relate, this gave great pleasure, and all joined in with gusto. In fistic parlance, this was a clean and well-fought contest, with no punches pulled, and the winning pair (Norman Pragnell and Frank Case) had to fight hard for victory.

The meeting ended with the usual brisk library business at 10 p.m.

Next meeting December 12th (6–30 p.m. instead of 7 p.m.)

FRANK CASE,
Hon. Secretary.

***

MIDLAND SECTION MEETING, NOVEMBER 15th: Many a time and oft weather forecasts have proved wrong this year and several members were kept away tonight by the unfulfilled promise of thick fog developing during the evening.

This was a pity as we had yet another full and pleasant evening, a great part of which was occupied by discussions on such questions as Frank Richards' status as a writer, how we became re-acquainted with Old Boys' Books in adult life, and the topical question of "horror comics". We also tackled a quiz.

We were very pleased to see Mr. W.W. Morgan again after an unavoidably lengthy absence.

We were very pleased also to hear a proposal for a club meeting the following Monday evening. This was at the suggestion of a very enthusiastic lady member, Mrs. Weston, whose birthday it is. We were much attracted by this nice idea, especially as club nights occur all too infrequently anyway. But to have meetings two successive weeks is certainly an/unprecedented and unparalleled occurrence for us, (but not unappreciated!).

After refreshments, we had a further discussion on the forthcoming Christmas Party (December 18th), and to close the evening, someone had the happy idea of fishing out a quantity of "Magnets" for sale. Looking through these seems an indispensable part of a club night.

EDWARD DAVEY.

CAN ANYONE PLEASE ASSIST THE LONDON CLUB LIBRARY TO COMPLETE A SERIES? GEMS 742 and 747 ARE WANTED.
ROGER JENKINS, 157 WESTERN AVENUE, LONDON, W.3.

AVAILABLE (ALL PERIODS) Magnets, Gems, Sexton Blakes, Populars, Boys Realms, Boys Friends, Boys Friend Library's, Marvels, Collectors' Digests, (Also Annuals), Union Jacks (1925–1933), S.O.L's All Types.
(1880–1914) British Boys, Boys of The Empire, Pals, Boys Graphic, Boys of England, Boys Herald, Young Men of Great Britain, Boys Own Annuals, Big Budget, Puck, Pluck, Comic Cuts, Larks, Worlds Comic, Ally Slopers, Scraps, Snapshots, Nuggets, Garland, Halfpenny Comic, Vanguards, Surprise.
ALDINES: Half-Holiday, Cheerful, Buffalo Bills, Boys Owns. ALSO Startlers, Rockets, Boys Magazines, Newnes Turpins. ANNUALS: Holiday (Most Issues), Champion, Playbox, Tiger Tims, School Friend, Schoolgirls Own, Modern Boy. Further Details gladly supplied, (S.A.E. Please). Satisfaction Guaranteed. Exchanges? Most Types O.B. Books and other pre-1940 Magazines wanted.
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T. LAMBERT, 347 GERTRUDE ROAD, NORWICH.

WANTED: ANY copies of CHIPS between years 1914 and 1920 (inclusive). Good Condition Only. 2/6 Each Offered.
L. PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

Wanted: Holiday Annuals for 1931, 1933, 1934, 1936, and 1937. In Good Condition. J. CORBETT, 49 GLYN FARM ROAD, QUINTON, BIRMINGHAM, 32.

GEMS for sale and wanted. MAGNETS 1126, 1127, 1128, 1177, 1179, 1180 required. H. BLOOM, 45 HAMPTON ROAD, ILFORD, ESSEX.

WANTED: Stories by JACK NORTH, RICHARD RANDOLPH, RANDOLPH RYLE, PARTICULARLY SCHOOL, CRICKET AND FOOTBALL YARNS. BROSTER, PRIMROSE COTTAGE, KINVER, STOURBRIDGE.

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L E T T E R B O X

WALLY BUNTER'S COMING BACK!

Rose Lawn,
Kingsgate-on-Sea,
Broadstairs, Kent.

November 16th, 1954.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for your letter and the C.D. I am very interested to hear that there may be a sketch of my unworthy self in the December issue, by the master-hand of C.H. Chapman. If it materialises, I shall certainly keep it, for no one could admire Chapman's skill more than I do.

The "Lone Texan" is out at last, though sure that guy hasn't been burning the wind on the trail! I was very pleased to read Eric's review of the same in the last C.D.: and pleased to add

that the deplorable misprints to which he alluded are being corrected in the second edition. It seems to me a remarkable production for the price, for both printing and paper are very good, apart from the misprints, and it is as long as a Bunter book; and what do paper covers matter anyway? How often I have tried to explain to publishers that people buy a book for the inside, not for the outside. In France the most weighty classical works are published in paper covers: and why not here? How often books are hung up, waiting on the book-binders, who really are not needed at all. But I am glad to see that paper covers are making their way at last, and hope to see many more of them.

I have lately finished writing a "Carcroft" serial for the "Silver Jacket": dealing with the perpetually attractive topic of a barring-out. Actually Carcroft, alone among my many scholastic establishments, has never had a barring-out so far. Now it is making up for lost time. I don't know whether you ever see Raymond Glendenning's Book of Sport annual. Felgate is there as usual. The next Bunter book, 'Billy Bunter's Double', is due in March or April, from Cassell's. Old readers who remember "Wally" may like to meet that interesting youth again.

Christmas is coming. I have given up counting my Christmasses: there have been so many of them. But I am always glad to see another. So I will wind up with best wishes for a happy Christmas to all old friends of the O.B.B.C., and all the best for the New Year.

With kindest regards,

FRANK RICHARDS.

* * * * * * *

TONICS!

(I go to bed tired the day the C.D's. have been mailed. Then letters like this begin to arrive. H.L.)

169a Oxford Road,
Calne, Wilts.
3. 11. 54.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

Please find enclosed 1/6d. P.O. for November Collector's Digest. This publication is of great interest. Long may you continue the good work.

Yours sincerely,

ELIZABETH P. EAMES.

AND THIS FROM A SICK BED.

Rathmines, Dublin, Ireland,

4th November, 1954.

Dear Herbert,

Enclosed please find my sub. for the November issue of C.D. How I am longing for it to arrive.

God bless you,

John.

P.S. Since writing above (a minute ago) the November "C.D." has reached me – Whoops, Cheers. John.

THE ST. GERALD'S HERALD by DEREK THOMSON

The St. Gerald's Herald is an amateur School Story magazine printed and published by Joseph Meechan of Glasgow. Mr. Meechan has a flair for writing School Stories and would like to keep the same in circulation as long as possible. Mr. Meechan, apart from having studied School Story Writing, took a six month course from Ruskin College, Oxford and obtained a first class certificate.

Mr. Meechan has about a dozen readers at the moment, but would like "a few" more! The stories are of standard interest and concern the escapades of Tom Bennet & Co. of the Fourth Form.

The Herald costs 7d., post free, and has 20 pages. The only illustration is by Henry Webb of Ipswich, who, each fortnight, gives the Herald a worthwhile appearance with his splendid drawings.

Mr. Meechan does not wish to set up a rival mag., but has asked me to try and secure some readers through the medium of Collector's Digest and sincerely hopes Herbert Leckenby will not take offence. Back numbers are now available from: Joseph Meechan, "The Mount", Kilsyth, Nr. Glasgow.

(No, of course, Herbert Leckenby won't take offence, for such a plucky effort deserves encouragement. H.L.)

Lack of space in the Annual has not permitted us to wish you all the Compliments of the Season, so may we, the publishers, take this opportunity of conveying to all readers of C.D. A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS INDEED and EVERY BEST WISH for 1955. We hope your eighth year's Annual will give you many hours of quiet enjoyment.

YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES, 7 THE SHAMBLES, YORK. Tel: YORK 3898.