STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

FEBRUARY 1973

'DESPERATE MEASURES!'

A Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale, by Martin Clifford, in this issue.

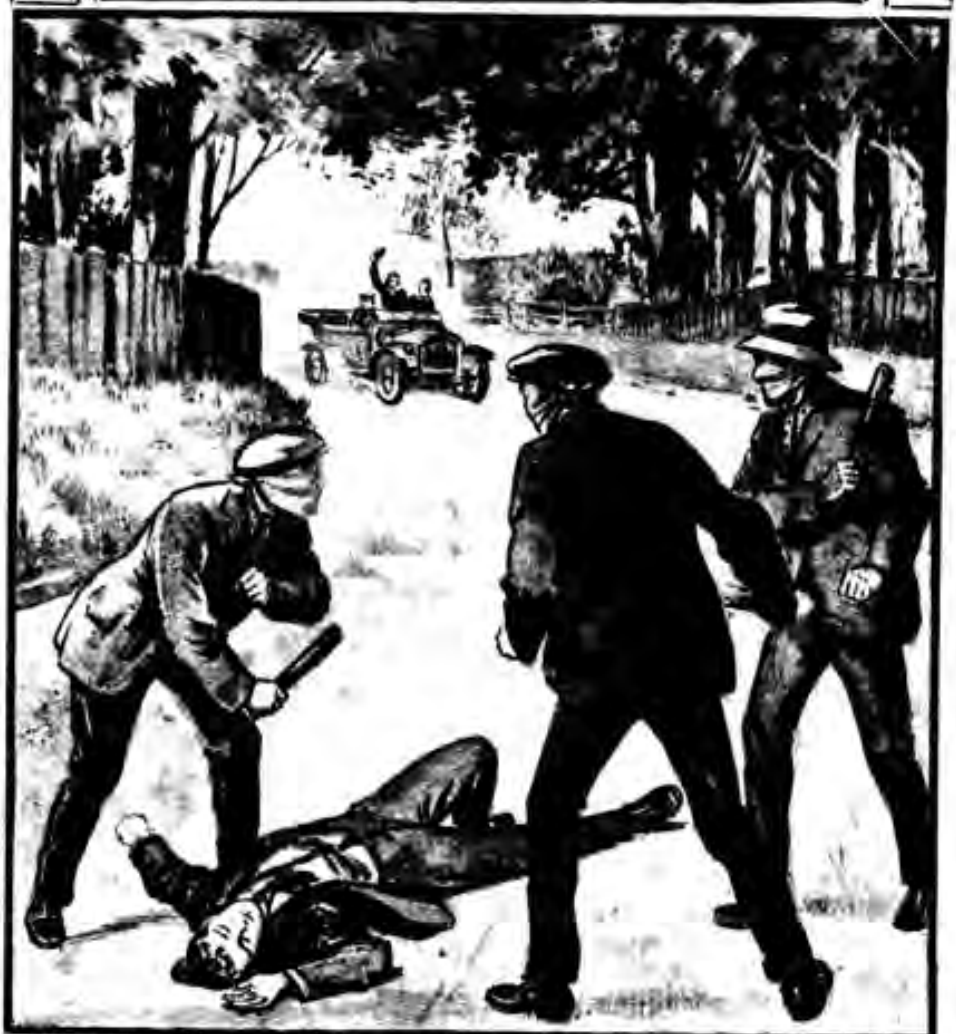
— Complete Stories for ALL and Every Story a GEM. —

The GEM 1D LIBRARY

— No. 321. — Vol. 8. —

VOL. 27

Nº 314



The sudden hoot of a motor-horn warned Lasker & Co. that they were not alone upon the road, and just as they reached Kildare's fallen form they paused to look along the road. The juniors' motor-car was sweeping down upon them, Tom Merry and D'Arcy standing up in it, with blazing eyes. "Faster!" shrieked Tom Merry to the chauffeur. "Faster, for Heaven's sake!" *(An exciting incident from the complete school story inside.)*

15p

15p

THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS - FEATURING NELSON LEES

Old Series. Loose copies 159 to 568 - 50p each.

Bound Volumes. Blue cloth, gilt lettering, mint covers.

187-204	264-283	501-515	All series
205-220	312-327	516-528	in the Vols.
237-249	358-374	553-568	are complete

New Series. 1st, 2nd, 3rd - most issues.

Many Bound, fine condition. Also St. Frank's, S.O.L's and B.F.L's, Facsimiles.

Large numbers of bound volumes, Gems, Magnets, Triumphs, Wizards, Modern Boys, Champions, etc. Back numbers of C.D. 8p. Annuals £1.50. Very comprehensive stocks available. Besides thousands of journals, etc. Now have over 5,000 hardbacks by popular Boys' Authors. Lots of Annuals.

Try me! Wants lists welcomed!

Top prices paid for collections and odd items.

NORMAN SHAW

84 BELVEDERE ROAD

UPPER NORWOOD

LONDON, SE19 2HZ

Tel. 01-771-9857

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR
Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST
Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

Vol. 27 | No. 314 | FEBRUARY 1973 | Price 15p

BREAKING ALL RECORDS

"Will you please let me know the name and address, as recently stated in the Sunday Mirror, of a collector who will give me £40 for a record of Bill Haley and his Comets?" So wrote to me an elderly lady who lives in Fareham. Her letter was one of a large number on similar lines which have rained on me in the past couple of months, all from elderly people as a result, apparently, of an item which appeared in a newspaper in November.

It may well be that there are people who will pay high prices for old pop records, but I know nothing of records beyond the fact that I gave away several hundreds when we left Surbiton. But hopeful old ladies and gentlemen seem to have written to the newspaper with offers of old Haley records, and, surprisingly, the newspaper seems to have told

these correspondents to get in touch with me, probably because this magazine has the word "Collectors" in its title.

I feel it feasible to consider that if a newspaper stirs up hope in the breasts of people who may be very hard up, then that newspaper should deal itself with the people whose hopes it has raised, and not pass the buck to somebody else. My replies to the dozens who have written (and letters are still coming in on the subject) are inevitably disappointing for them.

Someone on TV seems recently to have announced that a 1932 copy of "Merry & Bright" would fetch £50, a preposterous idea, and for the past 20 years we have continually come across people who have been led to believe, from articles in newspapers and magazines, that various old papers are worth far more than they actually are.

One of our own readers, Mr. Denis Gifford, was misquoted as saying that a copy of the Beano changed hands for £200, and the editor of the newspaper which had published this absurdity refused to print a correction.

I think it utterly irresponsible when writers and editors, for the sake of a sensational headline, make stupid claims which raise the hopes of elderly people who look out a few old copies from attics, only to have their hopes dashed. And when those people get referred to me, a great deal of valuable time is wasted when I have to write letters to folks who are strangers to me and to our hobby.

MAGNETS GALORE

I hear that the Magnet Building Society of Leicester (I think I've got the name right) is giving away volumes of Magnet reprints to prospective customers. I hear that our own readers in that pleasant part of the world are calling in at the Magnet - and walking off with a couple of volumes apiece. Reminds us of the time when Frank Richards wrote "Billy Bunter at Butlin's." He insisted it was not an advertising stunt - though we had our doubts at the time. It is difficult to say whether one approves - but that doesn't make any difference, in any case.

THE BALLOT

A very large number of readers registered their votes to allow

us to discover how popular or otherwise are the varied regular attractions in this magazine. As the votes poured in, each one was meticulously tabulated, and it was enthralling work. Plenty of voters sent covering letters, the majority insisting that they want no change and that C. D. is perfect as it is. One reader made an interesting point - that we should have included "Advertisements" in the ballot. "I always read all the ads first," he wrote. I agree with our reader that we might well have included the ads. It just did not occur to us.

The following is the order of popularity of our regular features, as shown in the ballot, with the number of marks recorded for each feature:

1st:	H.	DANNY'S DIARY (364)
2nd:	A.	Articles on Hamiltonia by occasional contributors (354)
3rd:	J.	Editorial (278)
4th:	K.	Let's Be Controversial (269)
5th:	D.	Blakiana (242)
6th:	I.	Do You Remember? (234)
7th:	M.	Reviews and News Items (182)
8th:	L.	Nelson Lee Column (171)
9th:	N.	The Postman Called (165)
10th:	E.	Classic Serial (158)
11th:	B.	Articles on the less noticed periodicals (150)
12th:	G.	Cover and other pictures (101)
13th:	C.	Articles off the beaten track (98)
14th:	F.	Club Reports (78)

My only concern about the poll is that our pictures won so few votes. Only a large personal collection of old papers makes possible the great variety we present, and, from the time they are photographed until they greet you in C. D., they cost quite a lot in these inflationary days. I regret that they are not more appreciated, but that does not mean that we have any intention of dropping them. Probably, like Mum, they are taken for granted, but would be sadly missed if they disappeared.

And now for the prizewinners in the competition in connection with the ballot. The winning run of letters is H; A; J; K; D; I.

£1 is being sent to K. J. BONUGLI, 60 Winchester Road, Bedford. (Mr. Bonugli found five of the Top Six, and gave those five in the correct order.) £1 is being sent to CHARLES VAN RENEN, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, South Africa. (Mr. Van Renen gave all six of the Top Six, and placed four of them in the correct order.) Congratulations to our farseeing prizewinners. And thanks to everybody who joined in the fun, and made the ballot so successful.

THE EDITOR

* *

DANNY'S DIARY

FEBRUARY 1923

Though February is under way the Rookwood chums are still on their Christmas holiday at the Priory. In "Pulling Coker's Leg," Coker and Co. from Greyfriars are still in the district, and Coker is scared stiff when he is made to believe that he has pushed Putty Grace out of a train.

In "All Lovell's Fault," all the Fistical Four fall through the ice and get wet as a result of Lovell's stubbornness. So they cannot go back to school when Rookwood at last re-opens for the Spring Term. And Putty Grace writes from Rookwood to tell them that Peele & Co. have bagged the end study which always has belonged to the Fistical Four. But when Jimmy & Co. go back to school after getting over their heavy colds, Jimmy works things out, and in "Jimmy Silver's Strategy" he finds a way to make the intruders give up the end study.

Final of the month, "A Rift in the Lute" is also the first tale in a new series. Jimmy, Newcome and Lovell are attacked by the Bagshot Bounders. Raby comes along, and they expect him to come to help the Rookwooders, but suddenly he darts off in the opposite direction and leaves his pals in the lurch. Later they accuse him of cowardice, which puts his back up, and the friendship among the Fistical Four is on the Rocks.

At the pictures we have seen some good films. Billie Burke was amusing in "The Education of Elizabeth;" Mae Marsh was delightful in

"Paddy the Next Best Ting" (Mum had read the book and loved this one); "The Prisoner of Zenda" was exciting; Richard Barthelmess was really splendid in "Tol'able Divid," and we much enjoyed Betty Balfour in her latest film "Wee Macgregor's Sweetheart."

The covers of the Magnet these days are all drawn by some artist whom I don't know, though he is quite good. Mr. Chapman is still doing the inside pictures. I wonder why he doesn't do the covers as well.

The series about Jim Lee has continued this month. In "Just Like Bunter," Bob Cherry falls over a cliff edge, and is knocked out though he lands on a ledge. Bunter is with him, but it is Jim Lee who manages to get Bob back to the cliff path. Then Jim goes off, and when Bob comes back to consciousness it is Bunter who claims to have rescued him. In "Straight as a Die," we learn that Ulick Driver has a hold over Lee, owing to Lee having passed some counterfeit bank-notes. Driver has put Lee at Greyfriars to make rich friends and assist in robbing them. That is why Lee has refused to make any friends. The series ended with "Friends at Last." Bob learns that it was Lee who rescued him on the cliff, and also about the hold that Driver has on Lee. Ulick Driver is arrested, and the Head and Mr. Quelch make arrangements for Lee's future. I found this a fairly interesting series, though I have read many much better.

"Alonzo the Athlete" was not by the real Frank Richards. Alonzo started taking a muscle-making mixture, and played football. Funny old tale, this one.

Princess Mary, who is married to Viscount Lascelles, has a son this month. This was celebrated, and there has also been a service at St. Paul's Cathedral to mark the fact that Sir Christopher Wren has been dead exactly 200 years.

England beat South Africa in the Fifth Test Match at Durban. We won by 109 runs. Hip, pip.

The Gem's Christmas Barring-Out series has gone on through this month, and has now ended. First of the month was "Hard Pressed" and continued in exciting fashion the war between the rebels and Mr. Railton's "old contemptibles." In "Unconquered," though Sergeant Stuckey and Co. made a big push, the rebels still remained in their stronghold. And Mr. Ratcliff had a rough time.

"The Rebel's Victory" was the last tale of the series, and I suppose it was really rather a weak finish. Inspector Skeat learns that a local tough, Jem Gadgett, has been spending golden sovereigns. Gadgett manages to dive over the rebels' barricades, and that's the end for him. He confesses that it was he who stole Mr. Ratcliff's hoard. The Head forgives the boys, and they go home to finish off their Christmas holidays (very nice, too, towards the end of February), while the Head sets men to work to repair the damage done in the school. As barring-out series go, this has been a pretty good one, with some pretty good moments. Yes, not a real winner - but pretty good.

Last of the month in the Gem was an anti-climax. It was called "Looking After the Professor." An old gent named Prof. Timothy Toppe comes to St. Jim's as stinks master. A rascally nephew tries to bag the old gent's property, and Tom Merry rescues the professor from Branksome Farm. It's all very unbelievable.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Danny mentions this month the unusual covers of the Magnets of this period. We discussed the matter a few years ago in C.D. The covers seem to have been drawn by an artist named Simmons. The Raby series, which Danny has just started and mentions this month, is the Rookwood series with the plot of that old substitute tale "Misunderstood," referred to last month in our Let's Be Controversial column.)

* *

NELSON LEE COLUMN

THE LAST ARTICLE BY GEMINI

Peter Gomm, of Codsall, Wolverhampton, died of a heart attack on 21st December, 1972. Mr. Gomm was a loyal and enthusiastic reader of this magazine, and he was a heart-warming correspondent. He was reading his new edition of the C.D. Annual when the delivery boy pushed his morning newspaper through his letter-box. He went to fetch the paper, his Annual still in his hand. It was at this moment that the fatal heart attack occurred.

Mr. Gomm was a professional writer. By his contract with his publishers, he was not allowed to write under his own name for any

other magazine. Consequently, he wrote for us, and in other spheres, under the pen name of Gemini.

At the time of his death, a letter, already addressed to me and stamped, lay on his desk. With that last letter came Gemini's last article for Collectors' Digest. I believe that the Lee came first with him. Therefore this last excellent article from his pen goes, fittingly, into our Nelson Lee Column.

On behalf of its readers, Collectors' Digest offers its deepest sympathy to Mrs. Stella Gomm and her family.

And now, here is Gemini's last article.

THE TIMES AND THE MEN . . by Gemini

It's nice to see the Nelson Lee so much in the news again (from the evidence of letters in December issue of "Digest") despite whatever the conflict of views. Speaking for myself, I do feel that it is necessary always to bear in mind that the hobby authors did not write for posterity but for the young people of their period and they can be best judged in that light. The fact that in their afterglow they are held in such affection by collectors and supporters united by this common bond testifies to the tremendous power of their abilities as well as the strength of nostalgia for those better days that often never were. To be young is probably the most wonderful time of life, but, as one ages, the memory can play too many tricks of selective adjustment.

Having said that, I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Fayne's editorial comments of December issue when he reflects upon the advantages of what he terms "over-ripeness." These are so beautifully conceived and written, so descriptive and so fervent and, indeed, so well portrayed that the imagery was almost three-dimensional as I read his words, that I believe they would enhance the pages of any anthology of prose devoted to England and the English scene. Everything he said was so true.

Side by side with such memories, of course, must be mories of the poverty, the lack of food, clothes and shoes for children as well as adults, the dirt, unemployment, the damage done to human dignity and, overall, the unfeeling face of society particularly in the earlier years of this century. Quite rightly, these do not have to be dwelt

upon, but they were all part of the environment which formed the background for the Old Papers, as we who have survived to debate in these pages well know.

It is equally true that these later years of television, instant everything, pollution, pornography and permissiveness have brought much decay from our old standards; but I believe that it is equally true that this country is going through a long period of self-searching re-adjustment during which the eternal values must reassert themselves and, indeed, already are showing signs of stirring strongly.

One of these values is the desire to read and listen again, instead of constantly devouring cartoon blurbs and the products of the sitting room "box" - something which has never really been lost but has, rather, strayed, and there is plenty of evidence that today our young people realise that they need - just as we and our forefathers did - the story tellers, the minstrels, the poets, and the prophets.

What people read normally springs from tastes developed from environment and education and the particular likes and dislikes of the individual. Often enough, some tastes can appal the rest of us, but I cannot believe in censorship because of the depth of license which can lie behind such control - the cure could be worse than the disease.

All this has got away from the writings of Hamilton and Brooks in fact, but not in intention, for they were just as subject to the values, the omissions, the criticisms, the attitudes and the tastes of their eras; which is why the continued appreciation of their outstanding craftsmanship is such resounding testimony to their uniqueness. I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Les Rowley when he comments that these authors were not in themselves giants of literature in their lifetimes and have not since become so, but that each gave their measure of happiness and each is remembered and re-read with affection. I believe that it is precisely because of these reasons that they have survived from the cheap paper of boys' fiction to achieve their uniqueness.

I do differ to a degree from many Hamilton enthusiasts in that while I can enjoy as much as ever his versatility, his plots, his style and expression, today I can only dip sparingly into his work - and have to admit that I cannot read one of his stories without skipping a great deal.

I have not found this to be true of my return to Brooks. Many of his stories can still hold his particular reader, especially when he mixed mystery and adventure with the school tales, as in the Old Series. In fact, I developed this theme in an item that I wrote for "Digest" in December, and reiterate that I do believe that, by good series selection, Brooks' Nelson Lee stories of the '20's would sell today, if economically and effectively presented.

If the two Howard Baker facsimiles of St. Frank's have not sold so well as the Greyfriars tales, I would not be surprised; even for Brooks' adherents, in my opinion, the Barring Out "Monster" was not up to later St. Frank's epics of similar theme, while the "Death of Church" series in the later facsimile was rather overloaded with heavy Handforth bathos. I believe that if the Old Series Ezra Quirke, for example, was given similar treatment it would be very popular, but I'm sure there are some practical printing problems in the way of enlarging the reproduction of that original eye-straining 6 point type, which of course could affect any of the Old Series - but there were indeed some excellent tales in the full Monster range that I hope will one day get further consideration.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE . . . by Geoffrey Wilde

What a stupefying farrago of illogic Mr. Acraman has contributed to the Brooks discussion! It is the more staggering to realise that such an outburst was provoked by a mere 7½ lines in last November's issue, where Mr. T. Hopkinson of Hyde confessed - in very temperate language - that he had neither as boy or man found much in Brooks, and that he preferred Hamilton. Though this is a preference to which Mr. Hopkinson is fully entitled, I certainly blame no Brooksite for trying to convince him that he has missed something worthwhile. But what does Mr. Acraman do?

1. He pleads injury; Mr. Hopkinson has wounded him. Now it is quite understandable for an author to feel upset if his work displeases, but why on earth should Mr. Acraman's feelings be hurt?

2. Since Mr. Acraman clearly feels that a viewpoint he does not share is one that no man can have arrived at honestly, he suggests in passing first, that Mr. Hopkinson is a gullible innocent brainwashed by the Editor; and second, that he is a jealous schemer who resents any space being given to ESB. This is insulting, irrelevant, and quite absurd.

3. He quotes at length the magazines and publishers who accepted Brooks' work. They cannot all be wrong, says he, therefore it is T.H. "who is not making the grade." This line of 'reasoning' is transparently spurious. There is no question of right or wrong: publishers simply accept what meets their needs, which vary considerably. And in any case, Mr. Hopkinson never suggested that ESB's work was unfit for publication. No-one disputes that Brooks was a competent professional; but is Mr. Acraman maintaining that we must admire everything that gets published?

4. Moving on to surer ground, he recommends certain Lee stories to T.H. and appeals to him to give them a fair trial. This is an entirely reasonable request.

Should Mr. Hopkinson remain unimpressed then clearly Brooks is not for him, and he and Mr. Acraman must agree to differ. At least, that's how the last bit ought to go, but we are told otherwise: it means Mr. Hopkinson is "beyond the pale," stubbornly refusing to acknowledge the light burning clear for him to see.

Hereafter Mr. Acraman becomes incoherent. We are to remember an airship blowing astray along with a copy of the National Georgraphic Magazine, while Brooks is the possessor of something called an Estrian. (Strange that so ardent a supporter can't get the name of Northestria right!) However, his gist is that if you don't like Brooks it's because you reckon him far-fetched, something you would never admit of Hamilton. This is yet another red herring, putting an imaginary argument into an opponent's mouth. The fact is, of course, that, credibility apart, one can like or dislike either author for a host of reasons.

Advocacy of this kind does ESB a great disservice. Nothing could more aptly bear out Harold Truscott's contention that we almost never meet a coherently-reasoned defence of Brooks. Since he was kind enough to exempt an effort of my own, I will try to live up to his estimate by offering here and now to write an article for the Lee Column. But it will not wallow in indiscriminate praise; it will be a discussion on 'Controversial' lines. So the question is - will the Lee Column accept it?

POINT OF VIEW

R. ACRAMAN writes:

Re Harry Truscotts acrticle and open letter in the January C.D. Tut Tut - Tut Tut Tut. I thoroughly enjoyed Jim Cook's article in the November issue it brings back many recent pleasant memories and I really feel H.T's letter with its "Der Tags" and damning by faint praise I quote "I have always been an admirer of Brooks' ability to devise an interesting even exciting story (spoilt at times by being too far fetched and by too slick denouements, not sufficiently worked out beforehand, too much improvisation in other words) and at the same time detested his manner of writing? "end quote" What a contrast of opinion Harry Truscott has. However he would seek to say a case has not been made out for Brooks by Jim Cooke or other "Leeite" I would suggest Jim Cook made out an excellent case in his item in the May C.D., and while I may not be a 100% Leeite or Hamiltonian man I would suggest my article following his does also make out a case to quote two. Yes I would like to see Harold Truscott make out a case for Brooks without Damning by faint praise, as quoted above by him. W. Listers article, January C.D., was a beautiful contrast.

* *

W A N T E D : Good loose copies or volumes containing one or more of the following: GEMS 817, 826, 828, 832. BOYS' FRIENDS issues between Nos. 1182 and 1256 (inclusive). Good copies essential.

ERIC FAYNE,
EXCELSIOR HOUSE, CROOKHAM RD., CROOKHAM, HAMPSHIRE.

X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

S A L E : "Union Jacks" 1923-1933. 25p each. S.a.e. -

BUSH, 34 FORD CLOSE, HERNE BAY, KENT.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

This month I have included an article by John Bridgewater on the "Case of the Crimson Conjuror," which I trust you will all enjoy. John has added a footnote to his article pointing out that in the Catalogue this story is noted as a Splash Page one, but he does not appear. John is quite right and I apologise for this long-standing error which should now be corrected in your Catalogues. So will you please delete the name of Splash Page from S. B. L. No. 171 2nd series. It does not appear under the reprint No. 723. I am always grateful to the good people who point out these errors because we must have our records correct. Now I will leave you to enjoy reading the rest of Blakiana. By the way, S. B. L. No. 171 is available to all members of the O. B. B. C. I have it in the Sexton Blake section of our Library.

"THE CASE OF THE CRIMSON CONJUROR" a Unique Blake Story?

A conjuror performs the unexpected and the impossible "before our very eyes." The Crimson Conjuror is no exception. A quarrel between Blake and Tinker is certainly unexpected. When it leads to Tinker leaving his beloved Guv'nor thinking himself badly treated and believing Blake's conception of the case to be quite wrong, then the Conjuror has achieved the impossible.

This second series S. B. L. No. 171 (reprinted in No. 723) is, I think, quite unique. We have many stories of Blake and Tinker acting independently. Neglecting those tales in which either Sexton Blake or Tinker do not appear at all, there are still a large number devoted to recounting the exploits of one when the other is removed from the scene of action by such devices as early capture by the opposition or absence on some mission related to the case in hand. The number of variations on this theme is considerable but only in the "Case of the Crimson Conjuror" do we find them working separately because of a quarrel.

The quarrel arises, as so often happens, from a few ill-chosen words. Blake is, in my view, wholly to blame. Tinker does show some signs of growing pains in thinking that the Guv'nor cannot always be right and telling him so. Blake could easily have dealt with this if he had taken the trouble. But no, he makes the common mistake of the "older and wiser" in dealing with the "young and impetuous." The reader's sympathy is with Tinker when he is snubbed by Blake in front of Coutts and others, including a young journalist friend of Tinker's. As if this were not enough Blake severely reproves Tinker when they are alone afterwards for "careless talk" with the journalist when he could have easily smoothed things over by taking the lad into his confidence. Having said too much, pride prevents any retraction. Tinker is hurt and resentful. Blake treats this as insubordination and Tinker, regretfully, goes his own way. Thus the breach is made in a manner which has brought about the breaking of many another strong bond between old and young.

How all is re-solved is told in an intriguing "locked-room" who-dun-it? type of tale set against a Circus background. The secret of how, who and why is well preserved right up to the end with a goodly supply of

red-herrings to lead astray along the way. I think that even the shrewdest reader may get a surprise at the end.

To have produced an excellent story unique in the vast number of Blake stories, a number so large that the odds against a unique tale make it almost an impossibility is a very remarkable achievement. Can we credit Gwyn Evans with that achievement?

MORE ABOUT YVONNE

by S. Gordon Swan

In a previous article I stressed the popularity of Mademoiselle Yvonne during the period 1913-1926. This popularity is exemplified by the fact that several authors other than G. H. Teed wrote about her during her creator's absence from the pages of the Union Jack for some four years. Numerous requests from readers must have motivated this restoration of a favourite character.

Robert Murray was commissioned to revive her, and he did so by bringing her into his Confederation series. She took part in a number of episodes of Blake's epic battle against the notorious crime syndicate and suffered, among other things, the destruction of her yacht, the Fleur de Lys. Writing about Yvonne must have inspired Robert Murray to create his own feminine character, Ysabel de Ferre, the Duchess of Jorsica.

The Black Duchess, as oldtime readers may remember, herself made a play for Sexton Blake and, bring rejected, kidnapped the detective and later captured Yvonne. The two were ultimately rescued by Dirk Dolland and Tinker. It is regrettable that, when the Confederation series was reprinted years later, Yvonne was replaced by an unknown lady, Mademoiselle Celeste. I am sure many readers would have been glad to see the return of Yvonne.

Two other writers made a brief mention of the adventuress. In the Kestrel's Prey (U. J. No. 913) Jack Lewis makes the following reference to her:

"A momentary vision of the glorious harbour of Janeiro, blue in the sunshine of a perfect day, glimpsed as a vignette through overhanging shrubberies from the Piazza of the Casino Francia, came like a shaft of light upon the faded memory of the lad (Tinker). He was seated at a

round table with the guv'nor and the remarkable Yvonne, and, as a white-haired, swarthy man with a Spanish-Brazilian wife came to the table near-by, she had leaned over and touched him on those same shoulders which at that moment had dipped into the Piccadilly throng ...

"This is Senor Don Richard McAuliffe, late of Aberdeen!" Yvonne had said, with a mischievous smile."

And in "The Wandering Jew" (U. J. No. 1130) by Gwyn Evans, Tinker meets a girl calling herself Della Ware, of Topaz City, whose real name is Sonia Petrova. The following is a short extract from the story:

"Tinker felt a curious loathing of the part he had to play. It seemed a shame to spy and hoodwink such a pretty girl. Hang it, she was almost as pretty as Mlle. Yvonne Cartier!"

One wonders what prompted these two authors to make such passing references to G. H. Teed's character.

In Anthony Skene's story, "Threatened by Three," Yvonne plays a bigger part and is credited with a Secret Service identity, No. 6. Three formidable criminals figure in this adventure -- no less than Monsieur Zenith, the incomparable albino, Leon Kestrel, the Master-Mummer, and Prince Wu Ling. It seems that Anthony Skene imagined Yvonne to be of Gallic origin (a not unreasonable assumption, in view of her name and the name of her yacht), for, when she is made prisoner and menaced with torture, she addresses her captors as "Messieurs," and exclaims "Mon Dieu!"

This story (No. 956 of the Union Jack) was the first of four special numbers. The last of these (No. 959) was "The Case of the Polish Refugee," and heralded the return of G. H. Teed and - the original Yvonne.

The full tale is not yet told. Still another author in John W. Bobin brought Yvonne into contact with the notorious George Marsden Plummer in "The Case of the Cultured Pearls" (Sexton Blake Library, First Series No. 208). So it will be seen that, what with her film appearance and her numerous adventures as recorded in the Union Jack, the Sexton Blake Library and The Boys' Journal, Mademoiselle Yvonne played an important part in the Sexton Blake Saga.

She was the forerunner of other feminine characters - June

Severance, Roxane, Claire Delisle, Julia Fortune - but the original is still remembered with affection by her admirers.

COMING SOON in BLAKIANA: The Last Words of F. Addington Symonds concerning Sexton Blake.

* *

DO YOU REMEMBER? by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 106 - Schoolboys' Own Library No. 93 - "The Get-Rich-Quick Schoolboy"

There is a charm and fascination about the Schoolboys' Own Library which is difficult to account for in many ways. The volumes are compact, easy to read, and seem to have survived in better condition than many of the weekly papers. The coloured covers are bright and attractive, and often afford the opportunity for interesting comparisons with the original illustrations in the Magnet and Gem from which they were copied. The books are easy to bind and are always enhanced by binding. It is little wonder that they are keenly sought after by some collectors.

Schoolboys' Own Library No. 93 is concerned entirely with the career of Fisher T. Fish. The American junior was originally depicted as a boastful ineffectual fellow, but, nevertheless likeable, and he would be among those invited to Wharton Lodge in holiday time. After a few years, however, his miserliness was frequently featured, and the two years preceding the first World War struck a rich vein of humour.

The first third of this Schoolboys' Own was devoted to a short extract from Magnet No. 284 dealing with Fish's pawnbroking business. It was a bad piece of editing that left many loose ends, but if this represented the defect of the Library the complete reprint of Magnet 242 that followed (after an editorial bridge passage) represented its virtues. This was an account of Fish's insurance scheme, based on Lloyd George's famous National Insurance Act ("Lloyd George is all right, look you!" said Morgan warmly). Fishy was prepared to insure against broken windows, illness, or accident, but the insurance

company was not quite what it seemed: nothing ever was, if Fishy had a hand in it. As usual, however, he 'got left' in the end, after an ingenious and amusing series of events.

There is an oddity about the last two chapters of the book. They deal with an inspection of the Remove studies by the Head, in which broken windows smashed during the life of the insurance scheme were severely commented on. These chapters were not written by Charles Hamilton and they seem to have been concocted merely to fill up the 4d. volume and to conclude on a strictly moral note with the guilty parties being caned by the Head. Magnet 242 had ended with some rough justice which was more acceptable and certainly entertaining. The interpolation can only be regarded as an unfortunate and unnecessary intrusion.

* *

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 178. MOMENTS OF MUSING

In every issue of this magazine somebody or other makes a comment which would provide a worth-while theme for a brief discussion at club meetings. I rather doubt whether these comments are often used in this way. At any rate, a few recent ones provide moments of musing this month in this column.

In December Mr. James Cook wrote: "Edwy was no longer writing what he liked to write but was writing to editorial policy."

I have often made it clear that I, personally, have no sympathy with such a contention. My view is that, for prolific writers for the medium which we discuss, the great nightmare was the shortage of plots. All was grist, plot-wise, that came to their mills. For writers of the class of Brooks and Hamilton I would never accept "Written to order" as an excuse for a deterioration in style and quality.

I recall it being said that the Magnet's Ravenspur Grange series was "written to order." Maybe - but what of it? I loved it when it first appeared - and still do. I am not certain that I ever mentioned it to Hamilton, but I feel sure that had I praised it to him he would have said: "Yes, it was a good story. I'm glad you liked it." If, on the

other hand, somebody said to him: "I thought Ravenspur Grange out of place in the Magnet," his rueful comment could be: "Well, of course, it wasn't my idea. The editor ordered it."

For those men who wrote hundreds of thousands of words every month to earn a substantial living - used to writing on scores of different themes - it could not have mattered what the subject was, so long as it was within their scope. If they could write, they could write on any subject the editor might suggest. I think the editors were often foolish with their policies - but I do not believe that any writer ever wrote poor stuff because the editor told him to.

In January, Mr. Robert Acraman had a gentle sneer at Hamilton's stories of ventriloquism in general, and at the Strong Alonzo series in particular. Mr. Acraman chose to ignore the fact that those of us who see Hamilton as a great school story-writer are not likely to be thinking of ventriloquists or Strong Alonzo. Though I confess that I have often enjoyed a real chuckle over Bunter's unlikely gift, absurd though I knew it to be. As for Strong Alonzo, anyone who dismisses that series with disdain is merely biased or not a very discriminating reader. A temporary strength acquired by the use of drugs is not far-fetched in any case, but the underlying theme of the intolerance of the reformer who suddenly acquires unaccustomed power made this into a remarkable series for the serious reader.

So far as Hamilton's trifles over ventriloquism went it is as well to remember that there is really a vast difference between rubbish and polished nonsense.

Finally, also in our January issue, Mr. Cyril Rowe commented, with an obvious side-kick at Hamilton: "Thank goodness, no Yaroohs! Leggos! etc." Here I am with Mr. Rowe. Ejaculations of that sort were typical of Hamilton throughout his career, and I think they marred the overall picture. The "Ha! ha! ha's" always seemed quaintly out-of-date, though goodness knows what their date was. But the "Yaroohs," "Yows," not to mention Crash! Splash! and the like were a form of padding which was overdone. It always puzzles me that, even when stories were abridged for re-printing, the blue pencil was not used more on these little warts. I hasten to say that this is purely a personal viewpoint. Yours may be different. As Mr. Hamilton might make me

add. "Ahem."

* *

SILVER JUBILEE OF OUR LONDON CLUB

In February, our London Club celebrates its 25th birthday. It is a quarter of a century since two far-sighted enthusiasts, Mr. Robert Blythe and the late Mr. Leonard Packman, founded the club which was to be the mother of all our clubs. A great success from the very start, the London Club has gone from strength to strength. Apart from the nucleus of stalwarts whose sincerity and zeal have never wavered as the years have swept by, the London Club, in its variety of venues, has entertained a great number of celebrities. The diversity of entertainment and activities has offered an evergreen link among the large number of members who have in common a love for the study of the old papers. The result has been a remarkable tribute to the devotion and energy of the officers of the club.

Collectors' Digest, which celebrated its own silver Jubilee just over a year ago, is proud to be the official organ of the clubs, and offers its warm and affectionate congratulations to the officers and members of the London Branch on this great occasion.

* *

CONTROVERSIAL ECHOES

BILL LOFTS: At one time the GEM story 'Misunderstood' (No. 285) was something of a mystery item. It was considered a good tale, but a substitute all the same. The late Herbert Leckenby suggested that it was written by R. Goodyear (an early boys' writer and contributor to our hobby) but official records at A.P. revealed it was by E. S. Brooks, and that its original title was 'The Coward of St. Jim's.'

Substitute writers' opinions differ as to which was the easiest to write - Greyfriars or St. Jim's. Francis Warwick said that he read the Magnet as a boy and knew the characters inside out - and when he was asked to write for the GEM he did not know the characters, and could have done a Magnet much better. That is why he created so many characters of his own.

Another sub-editor told me that Gem was always the hardest, mainly because of Gussy, who was extremely difficult to imitate successfully. He also said that the office was always receiving manuscripts of wouldbe Magnet writers - but very few Gem stories. This gave the impression that they found St. Jim's hardest to write.

CHARLES CHURCHILL: In "Let's be Controversial" this month I see it is mentioned that E.S.B. used an old Gem plot of his in a St. Frank's story later. This is quite correct. The story was in the B.F. Lib. No. 704 (4d.) and was entitled "Pots of Money." In this case Nelson Lee secretly supplied Handforth with "Pots of Money" in order to attract a crook. Naturally the plan succeeded. I never read the Gem mentioned but recognised the plot.

* *

The Postman Called

(Interesting items from the Editor's letter-bag)

CHRISTOPHER LOWDER (London): Thoroughly enjoyed the Annual this year. What I particularly like about C.D. Annuals is that there is so much good and enjoyable writing in them. I naturally enjoy the nostalgia of it all, but I also get a kick out of the fact that some enthusiasts are not so tied up with the facts and figures of the various sides of the Hobby that they cannot poke a little affectionate fun at them. Not a few of your writers and correspondents, alas, appear to have no sense of humour at all and tend to regard the works of Hamilton, Brooks, et al., as Holy Writ. The same cannot be said for Les Rowley, thank goodness. I didn't think he'd ever top last year's effort - W. G. Bunter's "Advice on Budget Holidays" - but this year's "Greyfriars' Calendar" was a positive triumph.

CHARLES BAKER (Caernarvon): Very many thanks for the C.D. Annual. You have made a splendid job of it, as you always do. It must be a tremendous task to compile all the many articles together. I am sure Herbert would have been very proud of the result.

I much enjoyed "The Spirit of Slade," and was glad to see an article by W. T. Thurbon. I have always had a soft spot for Jack, Sam

and Pete and would like to see more about these famous characters in future numbers of the C.D. if possible.

T. HOPKINSON (Hyde): I seem to have annoyed and upset the Nelson Lee brigade with my little letter in November's C.D. Mr. Acraman is talking through his hat when he says "I resent the small space given to E.S.B. publications." After all, I bought the book, didn't I?

Your "unfortunate remarks concerning E.S.B." had nothing whatever to do with my views. I have read Hamilton all my life - his writing style and characters give me very deep pleasure and satisfaction.

JOHN BUSH (Herne Bay): I should like to apologise to Laurie Sutton for stating that he was incorrect about the position of the Golden Domes cinema. After reading Josie Packman's letter in the January C.D. I realised I had confused the Grand cinema with the Golden Domes.

Regarding Editorial comment about the Red Lantern in Herne Bay. After making local enquiries, it appears that what was the Red Lantern cinema, is now a clothing manufactory although I cannot be completely certain that this information is correct.

JACK OVERHILL (Cambridge): An excellent Annual, though I was grieved to find so little about the dear old Gem and the Boys' Friend. I read first "The Spirit of Slade." A very polished story and I liked it.

Many articles are now so full of extracts that I think it spoils them. To keep shoving in these extracts is an easy form of padding that I don't like.

JOHN WALLEN (Liverpool): The recent C.D. Annual was superb. What a gift of Gold! It gave me hours of pleasure in the company of my favourite characters. Harold Truscott's opinion of Johnny Bull I did not concur with. Nevertheless, it made interesting and controversial reading, and this cannot be bad. Bob Blythe's article on Brooks' letters to Hinton, I found fascinating. Magnet memories,I thought, was also an interesting feature, and really well-written.

IAN HEWSON (Surbiton): I should like to say how much I enjoyed the Annual. It was a feast of entertainment and interesting facts. The article which I found most enjoyable was "Sub-Standard" by Laurie Sutton.

CYRIL ROWE (Norwich): I must disagree with an Annual contributor about Duncan Storm and the Bombay Castle. Storm I always found the liveliest of writers, and Dick Dorrington & Co. were my prime reason for taking the Boys' Friend, and for collecting it now so far as I can. Storm's descriptive writing of seas and countries and ports was first-class, and I am impressed by his idiomatic language, both in the boys' speech and in the story, in the mid-eastern and far-eastern usage and very particularly in his seamen, policemen, railwaymen, dock officials, etc. I think I have all he wrote under his various pen-names, though unfortunately only in part in his "Chuckles" serials.

Miss M. HARLOW (New Milton): Congratulations on producing a Bumper Christmas Digest, the delightful Annual and the January issue of Digest, in such a short space of time, no mean achievement, and thank you for the hours of pleasure given to us all.

I was most interested in Mr. O. W. Wadham's article on "Young Folk's Tales," as I recall reading these, even before I went to school but I regret never meeting "Prince Pippin."

I seem to remember 3 issues each month, one featuring Mabel, another about Betty, and the third was Dicky & Kitty. The books were slightly smaller in size than the Digest, and were coloured green, beyond that I'm not prepared to venture as it was rather a long time ago!!! but Mr. Wadham's article revived these much loved little books in my mind.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Many years back we ran in the Annual a series of fine articles by the late Otto Maurer, who was an expert on Young Folks' Tales and Pippiniana. Our correspondent should try to get hold of those old Annuals.)

N. W. WOOD (Chelmsford): Could we have an article some time about buying and selling prices? It is very difficult for the occasional buyer to know what is the "going price."

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: An article such as our reader suggests is hardly practicable. In a free country, sellers are entitled to ask what they like for their own property, and nobody is compelled to purchase. Condition of the old papers varies so much, and a good copy is obviously worth much more than a bad one. Even the idea of what is "mint" varies considerably according to the interpretation of vendors. Even if we tried to suggest a good average price, there are always people who will say "your price paid." Purchasers should use their own common sense before making a purchase. And it is wise to boycott the clearly over-priced item. I dislike advertisements in which "offers"

are invited; I would prefer a vendor to fix the price, even if it is high, for I can then take it or leave it.)

* *

News of the Clubs

CAMBRIDGE

A meeting of the Club was held on 14 January, 1973. Eight members were present, including president Bill Lofts.

Notice was given of the 25th Birthday Dinner of the London Club, on 18 February, and several members expressed interest and a wish to attend. Various members reported on correspondence received concerning the Hobby, Harold Forecast reporting that "Wizard" and "Rover" had amalgamated. Deryck Harvey and the Chairman reported on a proposed exhibition of magazines and comics, mainly from the collection of the Chairman, to be held in the Gallery of Messrs. Heffers, the leading Cambridge Booksellers, in February.

Chairman Danny Posner, then gave a demonstration, complete with "poetry" and slides, of a sales production item he had recently produced, incorporating material from Comics.

Bill Thurbon produced a football game given away with "Sports Pictures" in 1921. The Chairman commented on the difficulty in collecting the free gifts given away with papers in the '20's and '30's.

Vic Hearn gave an interesting talk on "Puck" and "The Champion" in the 1930's. He recalled his favourite picture series in "Puck" and commented on the fine art work. He also talked about the many football serials in "The Champion." He produced many items from his collection for the admiration of the meeting. Members were particularly fascinated with Vic's memories of Cambridge in the 1930's and of his weekly Saturday visits to his grandmother who used to take him shopping, always beginning with the purchase of "Puck" at a nearby Newsagents.

Next meeting at 3 Long Road, on Sunday, 11th February, 1973.

** ** **

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

It was with pleasant memories of last year's Christmas party at

the same rendezvous, that members gathered at "The Graduates Club" as guests of Marion and Ron Brockman, on Friday, 15th December, 1972.

After introductory drinks in the lounge during which members chattered with our guest of honour, Mr. Burns, Lecturer in English at the University of N. S. Wales, dinner was served in an appropriate setting, namely the club library. A beautifully decorated table, sparkling with crystal and silver, festive candles and Christmas place cards provided a superlative welcome to the following folk as they took their places around the festive hoard:- our host and hostess, Ron and Marion Brockman, Club Secretary: Bette Pate, Mr. Burns, Victor Colby, Stan and Mrs. Nicholls, Ernie Carter, Syd and Mrs. Smyth. Present in spirit was Arthur Holland, represented in wonderful fashion by his Dickensian Christmas card which contributed greatly to the festive atmosphere. Toasts were drunk, then a banquet was enjoyed by all, accompanied for the next three hours by hobby talk. The combination of Christmas fare and the discussion on Old Boys Books delighted the hearts of all.

A presentation was made to Mrs. Brockman by the Club Secretary, to express members' appreciation for the warm and lavish hospitality and the meeting was concluded on a very happy note with greetings for Christmas and the New Year for hobby members one and all.

** ** **

NORTHERN

Meeting on Saturday, 13th January

Chairman Geoffrey Wilde opened the meeting after the customary Library Session.

Arising from Jack Allison's talk in November, we discussed his question as to the sudden cessation of the Magnet in 1940 (just after the close of the Eastcliffe Lodge Series). Had Frank Richards unwittingly made his writing too realistic? Had the innocent Magnet come to be regarded as a potential danger to our espionage system? Probably this

sounds too fantastic and yet, who knows?

There followed a short game of the animal/vegetable/mineral type. Questions were asked of each team, the answers, so to speak, being related.

Those who are fortunate enough to possess the record 'Floreat Greyfriars' or who have heard it played many times may have forgotten 'the first, fine careless rapture,' but the Greyfriars man on hearing it for the first time experiences a thrill and a joy almost beyond words.

The Greyfriars song forms the setting and gives the tone, and the splendid dramatic readings of Nigel Anthony give life and realism to the characters. How well he reproduces the voices of Hurree Singh, Fishy and Gosling!

And what a thrill to hear the voice of Frank Richards himself, still young at 85 and telling us that he is only seventeen when he writes his books. "Every character at Greyfriars is a living person to me," says Frank, "and they don't grow any older."

Perhaps he gives us a key to the magic of it all when he says, "Greyfriars is a life of innocence - not as things are, but as they should be."

So it is. The ancient grey walls of Greyfriars will always stand and Harry Wharton will always be fifteen.

Floreat Greyfriars, semper Floreat!

** * **

LONDON

A quarter of a century has passed since we first met at 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich and here we were once more enjoying the first meeting of 1973, in the same room. A gratifying attendance, plus a good programme. Bob Blythe commenced with reading passages from Newsletter, January 1956, when the late Arthur Harris attended with his wife Irene. Naturally comic papers were well to the fore plus specimens of amateur magazines. Ray Hopkins read the Morcove article from the C.D. Annual of 1957, which our late esteemed Len Packman wrote. Winifred Morss read a couple of chapters from Magnet 1067 which dealt with Mr. Quelch, Mr. Mobbs and Ponsonby of

Highcliffe, a very good one indeed and Frank Richards at his best.

Millicent Lyle's excellent Greyfriars Quiz resulted in a tie - Eric Lawrence, Mary Cadogan, Winifred Morss and the Rev. Bruning.

From the 1923 Schoolgirls' Own Annual Mary Cadogan read the account of Bessie Bunter dealing with Bunter Court culled from the Cliff House Weekly and edited by Marjorie Hazeldene. Winifred Morss read some amusing paragraphs from Nelson Lee Library, 444, circa January 1924. Finally a debate re the two famous authors, Charles Hamilton and Edwy Searles Brooks.

Next gathering is the Luncheon Party at the Rembrandt Hotel, Kensington, on Sunday, 18th February. The time is 12.30 p.m. for 1 p.m. sharp.

Votes of thanks to Josie Packman, the hostess, terminated the meeting.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

** ** **

THE LAST MINUTE POST

JAMES COOK (Auckland): Brevity being the soul of wit, may I make a few brief replies to those who used my name in the current C.D?
Harold Truscott: Your 'Open Letter' to me "Wraps me in a most humorous sadness."
W. Lister: Thank you Bill for 'Knowing me.'
G. H. Wilde: "And if Brooks really isn't getting his due, the sooner the injustice can be remedied." Your words, not mine, old son.

O Bill Lister, I do not live in Australia! The shortest distance between that country and New Zealand is 1,330 miles!

E. N. LAMBERT (Surbiton): At last I have digested the Annual from end to end and must write to say how much I enjoyed it. As usual the Buddle story was my favourite with the article on Johnny Bull a close second. Altogether a wonderful Annual. My congratulations to all who contributed.

** ** **

WE'LL GO NO MORE A-ROVERING

by R. Hibbert

The last issue of 'THE ROVER' is dated 13th January, 1973. It died seven weeks before its 51st birthday.

From 20th January, readers are to ask for 'WIZARD and Rover;' 'Two Famous Papers in One.'

Right up to the end 'THE ROVER' syled itself 'The Star Story Paper for Boys.' 'Story' meaning story in words, not picture strip. On the page where the great 'team-up' is announced we're told, 'There's still lots to read.'

For how long? We're promised three 'stories' - we've been used to seven or eight - and 'seven great picture stories.' The three 'stories' are 'Morgyn the Mighty,' H. K. Rodd, 'The Wonder Man' and 'a thrilling complete story.' The 'thrilling completes' have been appearing on page 2 of 'THE ROVER' for some time and they're usually less than 1,000 words long. I'll bet that within a year the word 'Rover' has disappeared from the paper's cover and we'll be lucky if we have one story.

So we've reached the end of an era. The last boys' magazine consisting almost entirely of 'stories' has gone. The picture story paper has taken its place.

As a teacher I'm troubled. It's not all that difficult to teach children to read. Given a reasonable sized class, a good reading scheme and a methodical approach, it's fairly straightforward. Persuading children to read for pleasure is difficult. Many children don't join libraries and don't see books outside school. But once upon a time nearly all children were tempted to read comics (which had 'stories' on half their pages) and bloods. Children could afford 'story' papers; they swapped and passed them around. Children were exposed to reading and many did read. They weren't studying literature, but they were being amused and instructed. They were keeping up the mechanical side of reading and that's important. People who don't read forget how to read. I've always hoped - teachers live in hope - that when children read 'story' papers that they go on to books, novels, 'great' literature, history, poetry.

I think that the end of 'THE ROVER' has made it just that bit

harder for some boys to cultivate the reading habit.

* *

FASCINATING STAMP ISSUE by Vincent Page

Nicaragua the Central American Republic has just issued a set of 12 stamps to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Interpol - the international detective organisation.

Each stamp pictures an open book showing a page plate, illustrating 12 of the world's most popular detectives from fiction. The twelve decided in a poll conducted by the Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine earlier this year are:-

5c	Peter Wimsey - Dorothy Sayers
10c	Philip Marlowe - Raymond Chandler
15c	San Spade - Dashiell Hammett
20c	Perry Mason - Earle Stanley Gardiner
25c	Nero Wolfe - Rex Stout
35c	C. Auguste Dupin - Edgar Allan Poe
40c	Ellery Queen - Manfred Lee
50c	Father Brown - G. K. Chesterton
60c	Charlie Chan - Earl Derr Biggers
80c	Inspector Maigret - George Simenon
1c	Hercule Poirot - Agatha Christie
2c	Sherlock Holmes - A. Conan Doyle

* *

W A N T E D : Gems.

½d 8, 11, 18, 42 - 1d Series 74.

510, 658, 700, 701, 720, 721, 722, 744, 745, 749, 750, 751, 753, 755, 764, 776, 781, 797, 799, 801, 804, 807, 808, 812, 822, 831, 839, 841, 846, 867, 970, 976, 1069.

Your price paid. Write -

W. O. G. LOFTS, 56 SHERINGHAM HOUSE, LISSON ST., LONDON, N.W.1.

X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

WANTED: ABC Film Reviews 1951 to 1953 (30p offered each); 1954 to 1959 (25p) 1960 to January 1972 (20p). Also still wanted: Tiger Comics, about 140 required various years. have the first 249.

H. FRANKLIN, 83 UFFINGTON AVENUE, HARTSHOLME ESTATE, LINCOLN.

"THE BOUNDER OF GREYFRIARS" by John Wallen

Charles Hamilton immortalised many characters through the pages of the Magnet and Gem during the first half of the 20th century. Billy Bunter, the fattest and most famous of all.

But for me Herbert Vernon-Smith "The Bounder of Greyfriars," was his masterpiece of creativity. Rivalled only by that laconic customer the Catterpillar, whose infrequent appearances rather resembled a single ray of sunshine on a cloudy day.

Vernon-Smith meant - and still means - excitement, and fast flowing action. His wild and reckless escapades have never failed to thrill my heart.

What a role he played in the life of the Magnet. Grand old series like Vernon-Smith Captain, Bertie Vernon, and the first South Seas collection, spring to mind. Titles like "Bounder and Captain," "The Bounder's way," roll sweetly off the tongue.

Little would we realise reading "The Bounder of Greyfriars," (Magnet 119) the future treats that were in store for us. Vernon-Smith is pictured as a thorough blackguard, who arrives at Greyfriars drunk, and only remains because Dr. Locke is being blackmailed by his millionaire Father.

Does everybody remember Vernon-Smith's longer name? I quote from "The Bounder of Greyfriars."

"He turned a heavy glance upon Hazeldene.

"Is this Greyfriars?" he asked in a thick voice.

"Yes."

"Oh! I'm Vernon-Smith."

"Really?" grinned Hazeldene. "Sorry, I've never heard of you before. Are you coming into this School?"

"Yes. I-I-I'm Vernon-Smith-Herbert Tudor Vernon Vernon-Smith."

"Any more?" asked Bulstrode.

"Eh?"

"You're not Arthur Berkely Adolphus as well, by any chance?""

The name Tudor, and one of the Vernon's dropped out. For the better I think, you will agree.

Vernon-Smith's charm lingers on. In the Post-War Bunter books, where the "Fat Owl" rather resembled a one man band, and Harry Wharton and Co. are sadly relegated to the status of foils for the great William George. Only the Bounder finds his measure. Besides Bunter, only he figures prominently in these stories.

I cap Mr. Hamilton respectfully, for giving myself, and others, so many happy hours in the company of "The Bounder of Greyfriars."

* *

W A N T E D : Gem 510. Offered in exchange: Cousin Ethel's Schooldays or School Under Canvas, many others.

38 ST. THOMAS RD., PRESTON.

X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

FOR SALE: 50 Boys' Realm and 50 Boys' Friend dated early 1900's to 1920's - Post Free - in lots of 5 copies for 50p each lot. Also - Bound Volume of 'Dick Turpins' - No's 1 to 24 - good condition - £6 - Post Free - also Paper Back Armada and Merlin Publications of Bunter Stories - also Hardbacked copies of St. Jim's Stories and one copy of "Jack's The Boy," by Frank Richards - excellent condition.
Inquiries invited to -

L. RICHARDS,
18 RETFORD COURT, THE PHILOG, WHITCHURCH, CARDIFF.
Tel: Cardiff 612642

X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

F O R S A L E : A superb Bound Vol. of Rover for 1930 (52 copies) mint - possibly unique. 2 Bound Vols. of Gem, July 1938 - June 1939 - mint. 5 copies Dixon Hawke Library, good condition, rare. The full 9 Vols. of Eagle Annual, good condition. The full 11 copies of Gold Hawke, M. Clifford, good condition. Good offers wanted.
S.a.e. please -

A. MONEY, 77 FRENSHAM DRIVE, BRADFORD 7, YORKSHIRE.

X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

FOR SALE: Bargain for a new reader: 33 copies of C.D. of the very early nineteen-sixties and earlier: £1.50; SBL No. 24, 5th series "Murder on the Monte" (new copy) 15p; 10 BFL Jack North stories "Rise of Bowker's House" (good copy) "Prefects of Bowker's House" (good copy) "Staunchest of Chums" (good copy), "In Open Rebellion" (good copy) "Jack Jackson's Enemy" (good copy) "Moxon's Fag" (good copy) "Jimmy Mack Minor" (good copy) "The Kidnappers" (without covers) "A Troubled Term" (fair copy) "Brothers of Borden" (fair copy) £2.75 the 10. PLUCK 1912 Christmas Week Number, good copy, 15p. SBL No. 578 "The Prisoner of Lost Island" by John Hunter, rough copy: a tanner.
Bargain parcel of rough copies comprising SOL "Bunter the Benevolen," with 5 rough Lee SOL's: Touring School, St. Frank's Caravanners, Ghost of Somerton Abbey, Schoolboy Inventor, Kidnapped School; plus 4 rough new series NLL's. £1 the lot. Postage extra on all items. S.a.e. first to -

ERIC FAYNE,

EXCELSIOR HOUSE, CROOKHAM RD., CROOKHAM, HANTS.

REVIEW

"CALLING MR. QUELCH" — Frank Richards
(Howard Baker: £2.75)

This volume contains nine Magnets of the Gilbert Tracy series of late-1938. The first story of the series appeared in an earlier volume.

It is the plot of the Gem's Angelo Lee series used over again, and readers who are acquainted with the earlier series will compare it with this one. The Gem series was far shorter, which may have been an advantage. The Tracy series really comprises of a number of episodes, each complete in itself, linked by the theme of Tracy who was determined to leave Greyfriars while Mr. Quelch was equally determined that he should not. The style is typical of the later years of both the Magnet and the Gem, as was the fact that many series were just a little too long and some believe that this one was no exception.

But the Tracy series, of some 300,000 words, is competently written, and packed with incident. Though the plot does not develop in spectacular fashion, Tracy's character does, and he is a fascinating study. Anyone seeking to prove that Frank Richards was the world's greatest writer of school tales has a handy weapon with this one.

Production is excellent throughout. In our view, an improvement on recent volumes.

Covers are drawn by Shields, and interior pictures by Chapman.

* *

NORTHAMPTON READER DIES

James Jeyes of Adnitt Road, Northampton, died in mid-January. Mr. Jeyes, who had been an enthusiastic reader of this magazine for many years, was in his middle-seventies.

* *

Children's Annuals and comics for sale, 1870-1970.
S.a.e. -

43 KENDAL ROAD, N.W.10.
Tel: 01-452-7243

Edited by Eric Fayne, Excelsior House, 113 Crookham Road, Crookham, Nr. Aldershot, Hants.
Litho-duplicated by York Duplicating Services, 12a The Shambles, York.