STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 29 Nº 339 MARCH 1975

17p

THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS

Two large collections of Thomson's purchased recently. Skippers, Rovers, Wizards, Hotspurs, Adventures. Pre-war, war time and post war. Many bound volumes, also loose. Details on request. State wants.

Crusoe Monthly Magazines. Scarce. 20 numbers from No. 1 (1924), £12.
Lots of Lees, U.J's, Detective Weekly, Thriller, Magnet, Gem, Triumph, Boys' Cinema, Popular, Boys' Realm, Friends, etc. Some also in bound volumes. 60,000 comics and boys papers in stock. The largest stock of Old Boys Books in the country and still at reasonable prices. Inflation! Books are always a good investment. Enjoy them as well!

Visitors very welcome, but please advise first. Lots of "goodies" in my treasure cave and a warm welcome! Ask those who have been!

Still some facsimiles (as new, sh) available. Lots of C.D's, S.P.C., Miscellany - C.D. Annuals. Several large Film Collections purchased.

NORMAN SHAW

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STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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

COLLECTORS' DIGEST
Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

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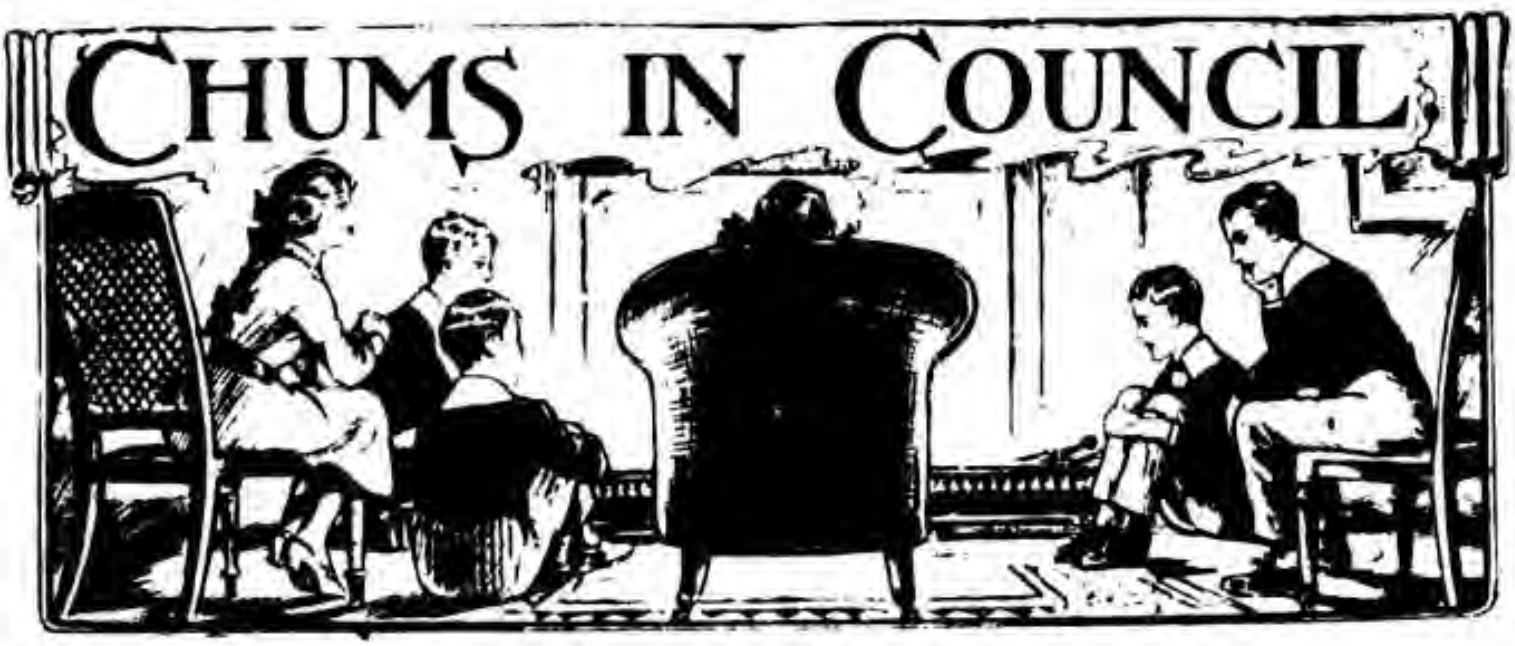

AD INFINITUM

Few things can have been written about so much as the old papers in general and Frank Richards in particular. Articles of all shapes and sizes are churned out to appear in papers and periodicals in a never-ending stream, and the editors publish them with an alacrity as though the writers had something new to say.

I read scores of them every year for the simple reason that our readers all over the country, and, indeed, all over the world, send them along to me. And most of them seem to be re-hashes of a handful of

articles published when the hobby was young, and the errors and exaggerations of the early writers are constantly repeated and perpetuated.

Awesome stress is always put on the value of the old papers, leading many poor old souls to dig a few tatty copies of the Gem out of the attic in the belief that they are sitting on a fortune. Nothing of course, has been so inflated by hopeful writers as the value of No. 1 of the Magnet. A few months ago I read in an American paper that it has been sold for £500, though the writer did not mention who paid it to whom. A week or two ago in a Surrey paper, a writer warned collectors that No. 1 of the Magnet would "set them back by over £100." Once again the writer did not say whether he was writing from experience, or whether, as I suspect, he was repeating what he has read elsewhere.

It seems to me to be unlikely that anyone would pay £100 for a Number 1 Magnet, even though we all know that there are people about with more money than sense who push up prices for the rank and file. (And, admittedly, I was astonished recently, in a Reading shop, to see an old copy of "Enquire Within Upon Everything", the like of which used to figure on my mother's book-shelf, priced at £1.)

But original Number One Magnets are so rare (even the British Museum hasn't one) that few folk are likely even to see one, and the facsimiles of the "Send Master Harry to me" story exist in such profusion that I just can't see anyone dipping deeply into savings to get an original.

As I said earlier, the writers of these various articles, mentioned above, never come up with anything new, and the bit about the immense value of single items may make a good heading but is never substantiated. In C. D. we often repeat ourselves, and readers love it. But we sometimes come up with the new observation - as last month we did over the weird Harry Dorrian business and the two differing tales of the circus at Greyfriars.

P. G. WODEHOUSE

The death of P. G. Wodehouse in mid-February has robbed the hobby of one of its brightest and one of its most intelligent stars. The greatest humorous writer of this or any age, he was the most English of all authors, and yet he spent the greatest part of his life in the United

States.

Hobbywise, he is most noteworthy for his superb school stories, written in Edwardian days. "Mike" is one of the finest, if not the finest, tales of school and cricket ever written, and there were many others including "The Head of Kay's" (in which the hero was Jimmy Silver), "The Gold Bat" and "A Prefect's Uncle". He was a pastmaster of the short school story (a most difficult accomplishment) and his "Tales of St. Austin's" are memorable in this class. Most of his school stories featured in "The Captain" in serial form before appearing in book form. A good deal of his material was reprinted in "The Boys' Friend" in the early twenties.

Typical of the man was his Preface to "The Head of Kay's". He wrote: "When this story appeared serially in the Captain, some idiot wrote to the editor pointing out several errors in the camp chapters. I am obliged. If he reads these chapters now, he will observe - with a thrill of joy - that I have made the corrections he suggested."

Personally, I have always regretted that Wodehouse wrote no more school stories after those early masterpieces. But his stories of the past fifty years, all with an aristocratic background, are treasured by a mass of his fans.

Some years back he accepted the Presidency of our Northern Club, and there has always been a warm-hearted link between our Northern friends and their President.

THE EDITOR

* *

DANNY'S DIARY

MARCH, 1925

Madame Tussaud's has burned down. The great fire occurred in the night of 18th March, and London is now lacking one of its most famous places. I suppose they will re-build it, and make new waxwork figures.

In the Boys' Friend, the St. Kit's serial "The Captain of the Fourth" ended, and a new one, "The Barring-Out at St. Kit's" has started.

Dr. Chenies, the Headmaster of St. Kit's was attacked mysteriously, so that he had to leave the school, and he was replaced by Mr. Carker, a real brute. And it seems that the sinister Mr. Carker was behind the attack on the old Head. Harry Wilmot and De Courcy have been joined in their study by Rake, an Australian, to form their new Co.

Two stories about Rawson, the scholarship boy, to start off the Rookwood month. In "Rough on Rawson" his family has fallen on hard times, so he will have to leave Rookwood at the end of term. He sells off some of his things, and Leggett is anxious to buy his stamp album for a few bob. In "A Turn of Luck", the Fistical Four wonder about Leggett and the stamp album, and get Mr. Mooney, who is a philatelist, to look at it. And Mr. Mooney is amazed to find a Post Office Mauritius in it - a stamp worth about two thousand pounds. So Rawson's troubles are over - and Rookwood juniors do not lose their goal-keeper.

In "Gunner's Brain Wave", Gunner gets an enormous imposition of a thousand lines, but he does not bother for he has asked his father for a typewriter. So Gunner turns up a thousand typed lines, and is crushed when Mr. Dalton won't accept them.

I can't help wondering whether typing a thousand lines wouldn't take nearly as long as writing them, but I suppose that Owen Conquest knows all about it.

Finally "The Rookwood Boat Race". Tubby Muffin has leave to go to the boat race with his father, and pretends that he can take a big party as well, which makes him popular, till he manages to give them all the slip on the towpath. Quite good fun, though a bit familiar.

Talking of the real boat race, Cambridge won it this year. The weather was bad, and the Oxford boat was waterlogged after passing Hammersmith Bridge. Cheers for Cambridge.

A rum old collection in the Magnet this month. In "The Great Postal-Order Mystery", Bunter finds a packet of un-issued shilling postal-orders in the lane, and proceeds to change them in the school. Fishy gets mixed up in it, and Skinner turns up disguised as P. C. Tozer till the real Tozer turns up. Then "Bunter the Prophet" which, in my opinion, was quite dotty. Bunter pretends he can tell the future - Professor Babu Bun-ta - Seeance now on! Loder owes somebody £50, and thinks a letter on the matter has been sent to the Head who is away

in London. Loder goes to the Head's study at night to bag the letter, accompanied by a spanner. Mossoo intercepts him in the dark. Loder drops his spanner and Mossoo falls and bangs his head. Loder has a fake wire sent to call him away from Greyfriars. A new French master turns up to replace Mossoo. The new French master is Loder with a beard, looking for his spanner. Finally he confesses to the Head.

"Coker's Cross-Words" was by the real Frank Richards, but all a bit too silly though it was funny in spasms. Coker's awful spelling is over-done as he tries to win £10 by composing a crossword puzzle.

Quite silly, I thought, was "The Mystery of Mossoo". Dupont claims that he has been robbed of a valuable document, and suspicion falls on Mossoo. Signor Tompsonio's circus comes near Greyfriars. Nono is the masked man on the flying trapeze. He turns out to be Mossoo, and he falls from the trapeze. Harry Wharton chases a dwarf over the trapezes. Mossoo was being blackmailed, - if anyone bothers much.

At the pictures this month I have seen Ramon Navarro and Alice Terry in "The Arab"; Rudolph Valentino and Bebe Daniels in "Monsieur Beaucaire"; Betty Compson in "The Enemy Sex"; J. Warren Kerrigan in "Captain Blood"; and Harold Lloyd in "Hot Water". All very good.

The first Gem of the month was "The Schoolboy Refugee". Lorne of the Fourth is dug up for this one. Dr. Holmes tells him that St. Jim's is receiving, as an experiment, a very tough reformatory boy - one of the worst characters - as a pupil at the school, and he is to go into Lorne's study. Surprisingly, Lorne doesn't like it much, and Trimble has heard it all. However, Lorne's cousin, who is also at the reformatory (guiltless, of course) boards a moving train from a bridge and saves Lorne who is being attacked by Hewett, the blackguardly one. And the good reformatory boy takes the place of the bad one. Then came "Chums at Loggerheads". Toby, the page, empties a bucket of water on the Head, meaning it for Taggles, and Gussy and Blake suspect each other of the deed.

"The Spy of the Fourth Form" was Paul Ratcliff. It's not the first time that poor Mr. Ratcliff has had an unpleasant nephew at St. Jim's. This one lives up to expectations. The sequel was "The Rebels of the School House". Mr. Ratcliff becomes acting-Head, with more

expected results. Finally Paul, who is called Ratty Minor, leaves - and not a minute too soon for me.

The newspapers have been full of a real-life mystery thriller. In December, a young lady named Elsie Cameron left her north London home to visit Norman Thorne, who owned a poultry farm at Crowborough in Sussex. Mr. Thorne claimed that Elsie never arrived, but a few weeks later the police dug up the chicken runs, and found portions of Elsie Cameron's body buried all over the place. He was arrested, and his trial will take place next month at Lewes.

The Sexton Blake Library and the Boys' Friend Library are to have brothers, starting next month - the Schoolboys' Own Library, two issues monthly, at 4d. each. These are obviously going to be old stories, and I'm jolly glad, for the new stories are not a patch on the old ones. To pay for them I shall have to get a paper round, or sell Mum's medicine bottles at 2d. a dozen, or write to my Gran. She likes me to read a lot.

* *

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

One of our regular readers would like to know more about those hard-cover stories published by Wright and Brown in the 1930's. Some of these were mentioned in Mr. Swan's article in the January Blakiana. I do happen to possess a few of these editions in my collection of Blakiana. They are as follows:-

Bottom of Suez by Hamilton Teed. Reprint of S. B. L. 2nd series, No. 19, The Great Canal Plot.

Five in Fear by G. H. Teed. Story unidentified so far.

In both stories Sexton Blake and Tinker became Grant Rushton and Tony. None of the other names were altered.

The Man with the Scarlet Skull by Gwyn Evans. Reprint of a Detective Weekly story, No. 112, The Hot Cross Bun Murders. Union Jack No. 1345, The Great Pyramid Swindle.

His Majesty The Crook by Gwyn Evans.

All reprints of Union Jack tales.

Sexton Blake became Quentin Drex. Splash Page became David Wyre and Tinker was omitted altogether. Otherwise the names were the same. Screwy sort of happenings went on in those days!

SEXTON VERSUS SHERLOCK

by J. E. M.

Among students of the detective story there will always be those superior persons who enjoy labelling Sexton Blake "A second-hand Sherlock Holmes". Certainly it must be admitted that Sherlock was the first well-known private investigator to have hawk-like features, a dressing gown for his thinking sessions and a Baker Street address. To deny these, and other, remarkable similarities between the two characters would be foolish. But, being first on the scene is one thing; pre-eminence is another.

At the risk of plunging into deep and stormy waters, let's have a look at a few of the rival claims of Sexton and Sherlock for the title of Baker Street's leading sleuth. We can leave aside such obvious facts as the far greater length of the Blakian Saga and the powerful evidence that Sexton Blake's name is better known than Sherlock Holmes's (see for instance E. S. Turners' Boys Will Be Boys).

In support of their hero Sherlockians may point to the "superiority" of his creator. An educated professional - a medical practitioner, no less - who later received a knighthood, Arthur Conan Doyle was also, if we needed any reminding, a writer of enormous distinction. Well, Sexton Blake's creator was undoubtedly a more humble figure, but he was supported by over 170 other chroniclers of Blake's great case book. If these were a mixed bag, socially and professionally, they did include at least two medical practitioners, Dr. William H. Jago and Dr. J. W. Staniforth, better known as Maxwell Scott, and at least one man of title - not a mere knight, but a real live lord, Viscount Mountmorres, who wrote a Blake serial for Chips. So much for the trappings and pedigrees.

Ah yes, (here we are nudged again by Holmes's supporters) but what about literary quality? No doubt some Blakian scribes did write stories of dubious merit, but then so did Doyle on occasion. We know that he held much of the Holmsian Saga in contempt and even tried to dispatch his hero over a Swiss waterfall. (The attempt was bungled.)

In our assessment of the two detectives, we obviously cannot ignore the authors' own opinions of them, for who could know the two men better? Not only did Conan Doyle try to assassinate the beloved Sherlock, he made it clear that at no time had he regarded him as the greatest living detective. This honour fell to Sherlock's brother Mycroft, the portly genius who could solve a case from his armchair and to whom Sherlock himself turned in desperation in the famous affair of The Greek Interpreter.

So far as I know, not one of Sexton Blake's vast army of chroniclers ever encountered a single detective who was Blake's equal, let alone his superior. And if readers, haunted by thoughts of Mycroft Holmes, ever wondered if there might also be a blood relative of Blake's with greater sleuthing skills, such speculations were brought to an end by Lewis Jackson's famous revelations in Detective Weekly concerning Sexton's brother. Nigel Blake, so far from being another Mycroft, was a waster who turned to crime and had to be quietly put away. The mere possibility that the superb heredity of the Blake family might have produced an even greater genius than Sexton - a man in the mould of Mycroft Holmes - was thus eliminated at a stroke.

So there we are. A win on points for Blake in the Baker Street contest? What do other Blakians and Sherlockians think? We Blakians must make it clear, of course, that we all love Holmes too, but the fellow must be kept in his place. He was never a modest man himself. As one wit memorably put it: though he might be more humble, there's no police like Holmes.

FOOTNOTE

If Sexton Blake was a copy of Sherlock Holmes, does Nero Wolfe, the fat armchair detective from the United States (creator Rex Stout) owe something of his origin to Mycroft Holmes?

2nd Footnote by Josie Packman

The answer to the first footnote must be yes!

The following information, very briefly, is given in the Bibliography of Nero Wolfe, written by William S. Baring Gould.

Nero Wolfe was reputed to be the son of Sherlock Holmes and Irene Adler, born about 1892/3 at a time when Holmes was absent from England. Thus Nero would have been the nephew of Mycroft Holmes.

Marko Vukcic, mentioned in the Nero Wolfe tales, was considered to be his twin brother, and, also due to his reputation as a "chicken chaser" and travels in Ohio during the years 1910 - 1912, the father of Archie Goodwin, thus making Wolfe and Archie, uncle and nephew.

Archie is therefore the grand-nephew of Mycroft from whom he has obviously inherited his detective ability.

SEXTON BLAKE - LORD MAYOR

by William Lister

When I was young and the world was young, pantomimes were all the "go". Goldilocks, Sinbad, Red Riding Hood, Puss in Boots, Cinderella, Aladdin and Dick Whittington. All very enjoyable. Today in my corner of the world Pantomimes are a bit thin on the ground, with production but a shadow of their forerunners. However, for the moment I am interested in "Dick Whittington". He did become Lord Mayor of London three times over.

Whenever I saw the Dick Whittington Pantomime my father always took the opportunity to explain how a poor lad could become Lord Mayor of London if he was honest, upright and enthusiastic. Being a poor lad at the time (we saw the pantomimes from what was called "the Gods" at sixpence a time) I wasn't quite sure what ambitions my father had for me. You can never tell with parents. Maybe he thought I might make Lord Mayor of London or even have settled for Mayor of Leeds or Blackpool. As it turned out I didn't make one or the other. I would not even be thinking about Mayor's now, but for the fact of seeing a Union Jack dated 10th November, 1928, No. 1308, entitled - Sexton Blake - Lord Mayor. The cover is resplendent with the gilded Mayoral coach complete with footmen and with Sexton Blake waving his Mayor's cocked hat through the window at the unseen cheering crowds. A real bit of British pageantry. However, let us to the story, it could give us a clue as to how Sexton Blake comes to be in that coach.

Almost on the eve of Lord Mayor's Day the Mayor elect had vanished. Vanished from a sick bed at his old baronial hall. (Now I know my readers will be suspicious having the recent case of an M. P. in mind, but let me put your mind at rest.) Sexton Blake, Tinker and Pedro arrive at the scene, and within minutes, by a clever bit of deduction and bloodhound ability, they proved that our missing Mayor had

not debunked of his own accord. The clues suggested he had been drugged, wrapped in a heavy coat, taken to a car and driven away. By the tracks and low broken branches Tinker can tell you what make of car it was. So take it from me our Mayor is not likely to turn up in Australia, we shall have to look elsewhere, or rather, follow our trio while they look elsewhere. Space will not allow us to follow hard. The immediate problem is - how come our Sexton Blake is in the gilded coach?

The answer, it was time for the Lord Mayor's parade. The time honoured spectacular event was at stake. The top corporation officials were manning their panic-stations. "We must make a start, the procession is waiting, but how can we start without a Lord Mayor. It's impossible" they cry.

"Impossible be hanged" exclaimed Sexton Blake. "Help me on with the robes, I've played many parts in my time so I think I can play this one". Blake reflected that it is indeed the clothes which make a convincing Lord Mayor.

Carry it off he did, until the real Lord Mayor turned up. Blake had beaten the villain and his kidnapping henchmen.

The curtain is about to drop.

THAT HOBBY MYSTERY

by W. O. G. Lofts

Although I cannot elucidate the mystery of S. Gordon Swan's recent interesting article, I can give some clues as to why Gwyn Evans may have dedicated his strange inscription ...

"To George Teed H. who understands".

According to R. C. Elliott another Blake writer, whom I met some years ago, Teed, Evans, and himself, all lived together at one time before they were married. Gwyn who was a tall beanpole of a figure, gay, full of fun, a general lovable type, was always playing jokes on people. Sometimes he did go a little too far on playing on a person's sensitive nature.

Teed on the other hand, was almost the opposite to Gwyn. A Canadian, he was generally a serious person, dour, but tough as nails due to his vast travels round the world in his early days. Many of his experiences in the Yukon and Far East he incorporated into his tales in

the Union Jack and Sexton Blake Library.

He did however have one very senstive spot - and that was his second christian name of Heber. For personal reasons he had altered it to Hamilton, and many people including the U. J. editor, H. W. Twyman and Gwyn Evans, knew about this. One should explain that authors were in the main colourful personalities, and they usually spent their story payments as fast as they drew them. Consequently many were generally in debt. Gwyn and Teed were in this category, and the former when he had funds was always generous in loans to fellow authors.

Fellow authors were not so generous when it came to pay the sums back. Some indeed used to 'owe' the writer a story, and it could be that simply Teed owed Gwyn a story, and Gwyn made sure of payment, and a sly dig at Teed at the same time. According to another writer, Teed and Evans did fall out over something or other, and maybe this could be the answer.

Dedications in books can indeed be most mystifying. So much so, that Ellery Queen in one of his anthologies, once devoted a chapter to the more unusual ones. One from Leslie Charteris' Saint books was queried, dealing with an unpopular Landlord and Mr. Charteris' mother. At a later date the Saint's creator was able to give me the exact meaning, and so I was one up on the great Ellery Queen.

Years ago I bought at a second-hand book stall a crime novel by Gerald Verner. Inside was a written message to W. W. Sayer (Pierre Quirroule) although I have met both authors since several times, neither was inclined to tell me what it exactly meant. Another famous writer, once told me that if he had the chance he would gladly 'undedicate' many of the messages he inserted in the front-pieces of novels. Obviously he had fallen out with the parties concerned.

Dedications can be puzzling and mystifying, and some would tax the powers of Sexton Blake himself to solve.

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EXCHANGE: Nine Radio Fun, Nos. 69, 209, 320, 321, 322, 323, 325. Two Kinema Comics Nos. 547, 565. Five Film Funs Nos. 868, 934, 997, 1006, 1008. Six BFL's Nos. 14, 23, 55, 61, 85, 376. Fight Champion Nos. 44, 50, 458, 464, 466, 695, 703, 704. Two Boys' Cinema Nos. 530, 590; Seven Modern Boy Nos. 89, 135, 140, 221, 231, 258, 295; Three Gem Nos. 1388, 1401, 1442. Will only exchange for Dixon Hawke Libs. or Robers 1936 - 1939.

MCMAHON, 54 HOZIER CRES., TANNOCHSIDE, UDDINGSTON.

Nelson Lee Column

MONKEY BUSINESS AT ST. FRANK'S or A TALE OF TWO MARMADUKES

by Len Wormull

Didn't the apes do well on the telly in 1974? There was Washoe, the amazing sign-reading chimp. The continuing saga of Planet of the Apes. Light relief from those celebrated Commercial chimps. Another visit by old King Kong himself. A documentary on the Gorilla, and a play in which chimpanzees take the place of semi-skilled workers.

Going ape was not uncommon with writers of boys' fiction, you will recall. E. S. Brooks, for one, kept a monkey on his pay-roll, named Marmaduke. Even starred him in his first original story for Schoolboys' Own Library, No. 4 - The Fighting Form Of St. Frank's. Although ostensibly a pet for Willy Handforth, Marmy was, in stark reality, the littlest fiend that ever walked St. Frank's. When the plot called for villainy, violence, vandalism, viciousness, vengeance - it was a case of send for Marmy. The Fighting Form was just such a case, and the call went out.

Mr. Suncliffe, the Third-Form master, is quickly disposed of by a stray cricket ball, to make way for a new master from Redcliffe School, a Mr. Marmaduke Muggles. A distinctly unpleasant gentleman, weedy, dapper, and a stickler for tidiness. His reasons for coming were twofold: the money was good, and he had been invited by his life-long friend, Mr. Pycraft. As master of a senior house, he nevertheless considered his new post beneath his dignity. And here I somehow felt at one with him.

Call it what you will, but I always preferred "upstairs" school life to the "downstairs" variety. Dash it all, fags were digestible in a minor key, but en masse - never! In this, we find Willy Handforth (whose interest in insects had recently waned) ministering to the needs of ailing Rupert the rat in the classroom. That's original, anyway. Caught in the act, the poor creature is thrown out of the window by the infuriated Muggles. It was when he later takes a swipe at Marmy that he makes a rod for his own back. Literally. Like I said, Marmy

could be mean.

For his moment of temper, not even Marmaduke Muggles deserved what followed. He was sound asleep when his namesake entered the bedroom. Neatly piled clothes were quickly torn to shreds. A new design in wallpaper was executed with a shaving brush dipped in boot polish. Then the final act of vengeance - the cane! Vicious cuts across the master's upturned face, and he was gone. But not before planting his young master's slippers as tell-tale evidence. The unmitigated cad! Willy, searching for him below, is the mistaken culprit, and accused. And expelled.

Chubby Heath takes up the cudgels on Willy's behalf, but Dr. Stafford could be blind to the obvious when it suited him. The Third Form stage a protest walk-out to the Old Mill, led by Willy himself. No return until Willy is reinstated, they chant. It takes Nipper the sleuth, and not the great Edward Oswald as one might expect, to come to the rescue. His powerful magnifying lens was hardly needed, he soon discovered. Monkey hairs and fingerprints were everywhere. It needed only Nelson Lee himself to point the accusing finger, and the case was closed. After all, one couldn't expect Marmy to compete with two of the slickest tecs in the business - what? Accused of perjury, poor Mr. Muggles is told to leave. The real culprit is pardoned, with the proviso that he is confined safely to pets' corner. Willy could hardly have known that the little beggar would soon be plotting the expulsion of brother Ted in like fashion for N. L. L. No. 8, New Series. For the moment, all was serene:

"Good!" he confided to Chubby, as they stood in front of Marmaduke's cage. "You can take it from me, my lad, that old Marmy will be back in our study inside three days! Who cares for rules?". And Marmaduke, it must be regretfully added, distinctly winked.

He knew he had a softy.

TWO INTERESTING POINTS

from James W. Cook

Apropos the interest in the old cinema that has been running in the C. D. recently I wonder if you would be interested in a puzzle I have come across. In 1924, in the Nelson Lee Library, the author E. S. Brooks, ran a weekly diary of his 'American Notebook' - a one-page

recording of what he saw on his journey to the United States. He mentions the time when he visited the Famous-Players Lasky studios and later saw Charlie Chaplin directing his (Chaplin's) first big film. That was in 1923. Now according to HAMLYN'S 'GREAT MOVIE STARS OF THE GOLDEN YEARS' this film was 'never shown'. Yet Brooks, in his diary, says this film was 'a great success'. The film was 'A WOMAN IN PARIS'.

It is strange that Mr. Brooks would state ... "... I was impressed by the calm, deliberate, painstaking efforts of Chaplin ... and I concluded even then that he would prove to be a master director. As everybody knows, 'A WOMAN IN PARIS' turned out to be a sensational film ..."

Actually it was in Los Angeles Brooks saw Chaplin directing ... later on, Brooks went on to the Famous Players' Lasky studios. So who is right? I can't say I remember the film being shown in London at the time ... but perhaps you may have noticed it in the lists of film titles that came your way?

I have another interesting point to make. Until now I have never seen mentioned a Chas. Hamilton contribution to the Nelson Lee Library. But in No. 338, Nov. 26, 1921, there is a short story, THE CORINTHIAN by Charles Hamilton. It is "A fine long complete football tale". I wonder if this was our Charles Hamilton? It is his style and runs to four pages at the back of the main St. Frank's tale.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Chaplin made "A Woman of Paris" as a vehicle for his beautiful leading-lady, Edna Purviance. It was not a success at the box-office. I have a feeling that Danny mentioned seeing it, in one of the extracts from his diary which we have published fairly recently.)

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REVIEWS

THE BURGLAR OF GREYFRIARS — Frank Richards
(Howard Baker Press: £3.20)

This volume of eight Magnets of 1940 is the remainder of the Lamb series. The first section of the series appeared in the volume which we reviewed recently.

It has been generally accepted that the Lamb series was too long

and overstayed its welcome in the Magnet. It seemed, like the little brook, to go on for ever, and the continual failure of the great detective Ferrers Locke seemed like a device to spin out the series - as it probably was.

That failing is possibly not so evident when the last stories, where the plot seemed to drag its heels, are gathered together in one volume. But, in any case, despite its disinclination to call a halt, there are some delightful sequences in the various stories plus some happy and amusing writing which rings a peal of bells. In particular, the chapters in which Mr. Lamb is made to believe that Mr. Quelch has returned to Greyfriars are a joy, and there is a great deal in this volume which is well worth while.

A WALK THROUGH TIME (Outpost Publications) 40p

Poetry is, of course, an acquired taste. Therefore this little book will not be everybody's cup of tea. Personally, I have enjoyed it immensely. It never tries to be highbrow; in places, the poet plays ingenuously upon the heart-strings, making us rather sad one moment and making us laugh the next. It looks back, not in anger but with pleasure.

One of the items "Precious Gem" was first published in the C.D. Annual for 1974. Another, "Full House", was inspired by a C.D. editorial, so the writer tells me. And there is plenty of humour, as in "Man's Eye View", in which the mini-skirted, peroxided eyefull, sitting opposite in the bus, asks for a "tuppenny half" when the conductor comes round, and also the lovely fragment in which the author was bored with the long school holiday - but not so bored as his mother was at having him under her feet all the time.

The book can be obtained at a modest 40p inclusive from the author, our own Laurie Sutton, by writing to him at 73 Lancing Road, Orpington, Kent.

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WANTED: Sexton Blakes 1st and 2nd Series, Union Jacks, Collectors' miscellany. Duplicate U.J's for sale or exchange.

H. OWEN, 28 NARCISSUS RD., LONDON, N.W.6.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 126 - 1922 The Boys' Friend Library - Mornington's Expulsion

1922 was a year in which both the Magnet and the Gem began to look up again after some lean years when substitute writers had had a field day, but it was a tip-top year from beginning to end for the Rookwood stories in the Boys' Friend. As the Schoolboys' Own Library is the most accessible means of reading Rookwood stories today, reference will be made to the reprint numbers in that Library when tracing the vicissitudes in Mornington's fortunes during that vintage year.

It was towards the end of the summer term that the long saga began. Mornington was off-colour and had been left out of the cricket team to play St. Jim's. This brought out the worst side of his nature, and after a series of vindictive actions he eventually plotted to have Jimmy Silver found guilty of stealing Monsieur Monceau's watch. At the last minute he confessed to the trick, and was expelled from Rookwood. A week later, he happened to be in the neighbourhood of Highcliffe and, ironically enough, was able to play cricket for Rookwood and managed to save the match for his old school. This is where S. O. L. 104 "Dropped from the Team" ends:

"See you again, some day!" said Jimmy Silver at last.

"At Rookwood, perhaps."

"I - I hope so; but -"

"One never knows!" said Mornington, with an odd smile. And then he was gone.

Readers of the Schoolboys' Own Library never found out how Mornington got back to Rookwood. Perhaps if the editorial staff had been prepared to look through more than a few issues of the Boys' Friend, they would have selected the final sequel for reprinting as well.

In the meantime, the summer holiday series with Trotsky the donkey was taking place. It was a delightful interlude with many nostalgic descriptions of deserted country roads, and the whole series was adequately reprinted in S. O. L's 84 and 132. The main focus of interest from our point of view is the meeting with Mornington and the dispute with his Stacpoole cousins, Augustus and Aubrey, which led to Mornington accompanying the hikers for a while on their journey.

The unreprinted sequel took place at the end of the autumn term. A new boot-boy arrived, named Sandy Smacke, and it was soon clear to the reader that he was Mornington in disguise. Levison had adopted the same expedient in the Gem some years earlier, and however improbable such an imposture might seem it certainly did not detract from the fascination of the series, with Dr. Chisholm finding Mornington in his study one evening, vainly asking to be forgiven, and Mr. Dalton being addressed by Mornington through a locked door. Inspector Sharpe was asked to investigate how an expelled junior could remain concealed on the premises of the school, and Mornington made a fool of him as well. In the end, he was injured attacking a burglar, and was allowed to resume his place in the Fourth Form. There could be no doubt that a magnificent year had ended with a magnificent series.

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LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 199. A MATTER OF TASTE

A correspondent, whose letter appeared in last month's issue, was irritated because Danny never shows much enthusiasm over substitute stories.

Among boy readers of the Gem and Magnet there were plenty who could tell the genuine from the imitation stories. There were others who could not tell the difference. There are, in fact, plenty of adults who cannot tell the difference to-day. Not so long ago I had a letter from a reader who assessed the Bounder's character, backing up certain arguments by quoting from a post-war substitute tale. I have had letters from people who sum up Hamilton's religious beliefs from "The Sunday Crusaders" - and I find it astounding.

It is possible that boys, like Danny, who could tell the difference all those years ago, were less than fair to the sub tales as a whole. It is likely that they were impatient, recognising that someone was imitating their favourite author, and so closed their eyes to merit.

The difference in the genuine and the imitation was, in my own view, the difference between the Hamilton stories and the stories in the "Whizzbang". But though some of us could not enjoy the stories in the "Whizzbang", there were obviously plenty who could. In fact, there is

no doubt that plenty of the youthful public enjoyed the Whizzbang more than the Magnet. And those readers would, in all probability, have no real taste for Hamilton.

For plenty of boys, the plot was of more importance than the style of writing. And most of the sub tales, though their style might be in question, had plenty of plot.

Fifty years ago this month, Danny read a story in which Monsieur Charpentier appeared as an acrobat on the flying trapeze. Surely many boys who read it must have thought it too ridiculous for words. Yet, over sixty years ago, Hamilton himself wrote a tale in which Mossoo sang saucy songs on the sands at Blackpool. That, too, was surely quite unbelievable, even though it was related more persuasively.

Some time in 1925, a sub writer contributed a tale in which Alonzo became the possessor of amazing strength. Some years later, Hamilton himself used a similar theme in the Strong Alonzo series, though the difference in the story-telling is a lesson in itself.

In a Gem of exactly fifty years ago, a sub writer caused Dr. Holmes to experiment by taking into St. Jim's a reformatory boy - the roughest and toughest character they could find at the reformatory. The sub writer starred Lorne, who had been dead wood since blue cover days - it was typical of the subs to star characters who had been lost in the mists of time. The Head told Lorne about the experiment, and did not make sure that nobody was listening-in to the conversation. It must surely have been evident to any thinking schoolboy reader of the day that basically the tale was preposterous, unless Dr. Holmes was to emerge as mentally deficient.

Our correspondent, Mr. Tomlinson, mentioned two "very good" Pentelow tales in 1924, which Danny "brushed aside with contempt." I asked Mr. Tomlinson for the titles of these two, and he tells me they were "Capped for Greyfriars" and "True Blue".

The former was the stock plot of the juniors who played for the First Eleven and did well. Hamilton himself used it a good many times, both before and after, I expect. Pentelow's style was so completely his own that you either liked it a lot or were bored stiff with it. For the non-Pentelow fan, the detailed description of the cricket could be boring. But maybe Danny was just being awkward over this one.

But "True Blue" had a good deal of plot. A boy at Greyfriars has a half-brother who is a master at Courtfield Council School. The master is a kleptomaniac, but the boy at Greyfriars has a big influence on him for good, which is why the boy is at Greyfriars. One might not think that a Greyfriars schoolboy would have a lot of contact with a master at Courtfield Council School, but there are two cricket fixtures in the tale between the two schools, and they serve the author's purpose. Pinching is rife, and innocent people are suspected.

Finally, of course, the master has to leave Courtfield and the youthful half-brother also leaves Greyfriars. The youngster confides to Harry Wharton & Co. that he always has to be near the adult kleptomaniac in order to influence him for good. "I have been at four different schools in a year", he admits, thus suggesting that the master has also had four different posts in the year. The Headmasters in question must have been a bit careless about whom they engaged.

Often the sub writer foundered over the sheer absurdity of his basic plot. They got by with some, but not with all readers. It took all tastes to make up the Magnet and Gem readership. Danny, in his diary, merely expressed his own taste. Generally speaking, he didn't like sub tales. He may have been unreasonable. I daresay there are plenty C.D. readers who would like us to exclude any reference at all to the sub stories, but we generally leave Danny's Diary intact in order to keep the record complete.

An interesting footnote. Monsieur Charpentier, as a trapeze artist, did his act at Tompsonio's (sic) Circus, and Joey Pye and Clotilde were mentioned. It was not unknown for some sub writers to go back to Red Cover days for their characters - in this case, it was about fifteen years since that particular circus had given a performance in the Magnet.

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C.D. READER DIES

We regret to learn of the death of Mr. John Trovell, of Colchester. Mr. Trovell had been a keen reader of this magazine for many years. His particular joy was Danny's Diary, and he was a keen Hamiltonian.

He contributed to C.D. from time to time.

FAREWELL TO TOMSONIO'S CIRCUS

THE CIRCUS RIDERS

The performance was by no means over. Signor Tomsonio announced the Handsome Man. Jim Carson came bounding into the ring, and climbed a rope-ladder to the top of the tent with the ease and grace of the practised acrobat.

Jim Carson was no modest hero, for he enjoyed the applause of the spectators more than anything else. Nevertheless, he had a nerve of iron while in the air, and his performance was always fully appreciated.

As the Handsome Man retired from the ring, the signor strutted into the centre of the arena, and, cracking his whip, raised his voice.

"Jungle Jack," he cried. "The Boy Tiger-Tamer."

There was some commotion at the ring-entrance, and the great tiger-cage was hauled in.

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry, turning to Billy Bunter. "That chap we spoke to this morning is going into the cage."

"Of course, those beasts are quite tame, Cherry."

"Ass!"

"It's almost like a chap fooling about with a couple of dogs."

"Fathead!"

"Well," continued the fat junior, "I wouldn't mind doing the same as this Jungle Jack."

"Dry up and watch the performance," said Harry Wharton, as Jungle Jack entered the cage, and the huge door clanged to behind him.

Jack Talbot was in good form to-night, and he put Julius and Julia through their paces without hesitation. The huge audience held their breath in suspense as the boy tiger-tamer commanded Julius to open his mouth, and Jack put his head into it.

Then the two tigers sprang through paper hoops, and went through their usual tricks.

As the grand finale Jack Talbot made Julius and Julia in turn carry him by the belt round and round the cage.

The audience simply gasped.

Jungle Jack scrambled out of the cage, and was greeted by a thunder of applause.

He bowed again and again, and smiled at Harry Wharton & Co. who persisted in calling "Encore".

"Hallo, it's 'God Save the King!'" said Bob Cherry, snatching his cap from his head.

The audience rose to their feet, and after the National Anthem there was a general scramble for the exits.

Jack Talbot, throwing a cape over his shoulders, stood at the ring entrance and watched the crowd streaming out. He turned as a light touch fell on his arm, and he looked into the smiling face of Clotilde.

"Hallo, Clotilde," he said. "How well your riding went down this evening."

The girl laughed in the pleasing manner she had.

"I think you had the lion's, or, rather, the tiger's share of applause, Jack," she said.

"Nonsense!"

"You did - and you deserved it."

The boy and girl chum caught sight of a fat junior who was standing a few yards away.

"Didn't we see you this morning?" asked Jack Talbot.

Billy Bunter, the fat boy, grinned.

"Yes. I've just dodged away from the rest of the fellows."

"Oh!"

"Yes, they have to turn into bed fairly early, you know."

Clotilde smiled, as Jack Talbot caught her eye.

"Do they? How is it you don't have to?"

"Well, you see, I feel a bit shaken after the riding contest, and I thought we might have a bit of supper together - just we three, you know."

"Have you come over faint again?" asked Clotilde.

"Yes, rather."

"Does that kick make you feel faint?"

"It's ruined my constitution," explained Bunter, "and the only thing is to take nourishment."

Joey Pye somersaulted to the spot where the three stood.

"Joey, this chap has come over faint again," said Talbot.

Joey Pye rolled his eyes.

"Oh, if only I could stow wheezes like this youth can stow grub," sighed the clown.

"If you can't entertain a chap I'll be getting back to Greyfriars," said Billy.

"Oh, no!" laughed Jack Talbot. "Come over to my caravan. I've got something eatable there."

"That's awfully decent of you."

"Not at all! Come on!"

And Joey Pye and Jack Talbot marched Bunter off, leaving Clotilde with Samson, the Strong Man, who had joined the little party.

Clambering into the caravan, Jack soon had a couple of lamps burning, and he gave his guest a seat to sit down on.

"Jolly good!" murmured Billy Bunter, as Joey Pye placed before him a pork-pie and two large cakes.

The two circus chums whistled in astonishment as the pork-pie disappeared, and their guest started on the cakes.

"You're a wonderful eating machine," said Mr. Pye.

Bunter blinked through his huge spectacles.

"Yes," he replied. "I'm a bit of a wonder at the old school. Of course, I cause a lot of jealousy, especially my ventriloquism ---"

"Ventrilowhat?"

"My ventriloquism. I'm jolly clever at throwing my voice."

"Oh!"

"Chaps always come to me to work a successful jape at the school," continued Bunter, cutting a slice from the second cake.

Mr. Pye nodded as he began to sift the mystery of the strange scene in the stable earlier in the evening, when Old Joe "talked".

"That was a very clever example," said Joey.

"What was?"

"In the stable."

Billy Bunter beamed.

"It was clever, wasn't it? You know, one day I hope to --"

"Hallo!" interrupted Jack Talbot, opening the caravan door. "I thought I heard someone shouting out your name."

"Really?" stuttered the fat junior.

Joey Pye gazed at him in wonder.

"What an addition you would make to Signor Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus and Hippodrome!" he muttered. "I can see the bills now - the Schoolboy Ventriloquist and Food-destroyer. A bullock will be roasted in the ring and stowed away by this child-wonder in five minutes. What did you say, Jackie?"

Jungle Jack had not made any comment on Joey Pye's soliloquising, for he had left the caravan to join the Greyfriars juniors who were searching for Billy Bunter. He soon found them, and led Harry Wharton & Co. over to the caravan.

"You fat bounder!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he caught sight of Bunter, who was in conversation with Mr. Pye.

"Half a minute, you chaps!"

"Rats! Come along, or we shall be late for call-over."

"I just want to --"

Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent scrambled into the caravan, and interrupted Bunter's request by tumbling the fat junior out into the open.

"Now come along back to Greyfriars, you fat cormorant."

"I was just coming, Wharton, but --"

"Shut up!"

Jungle Jack and Joey Pye leaned against the caravan steps as the schoolboys whisked Bunter away. The fat junior was still remonstrating with his captors as they were lost to view from the two circus chums.

"It must be jolly nice to be at a school like that," sighed Jack Talbot.

Mr. Pye smiled at the young tiger-tamer.

"There are places just as nice, Jackie," he said. "Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus, for instance. You are enabled to converse freely with the renowned mirth-merchant, Joseph Montgomery Pye. Then you have Clotilde --"

"Yes," interrupted Jungle Jack, smiling at Joey Pye, "there is that to be taken into consideration, and I wouldn't be parted from you and Clotilde for worlds."

"Shake, sonny!" said the clown.

And Jack Talbot grasped Joey Pye by the hand.

KEEP AN EYE

OPEN FOR OUR

NEXT CLASSIC SERIAL

* *

BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

No. 12. THREE "GREATS" OF THE LATTER-DAY SILENTS

This term we played three of the really big super productions of the closing era of the silent cinema. They all came from Metro Goldwyn Mayer. The first of these

was "The Cossacks" starring John Gilbert with Renee Adoree. I can recall nothing about it except that it was described as "massive". The second was "White Shadows in the South Seas" (shades of King of the Islands) starring Monte Blue and Raquel Torres. This was described as "the saga of a dying race", and I recall it as a very fine film, with beautiful scenery and an exciting story. The third was Ralph Forbes and Dolores Del Rio in "The Trail of '98." This was a real Boys' Own Paper type of story of the search for gold. I have already, in this series, mentioned one of our earlier features, "Stepping Along", in which a racing-car was bright red in a black and white film. In "The Trail of '98", the gold, when it was found, was in glowing colour - gold. It was most effective. A masterpiece of the later silents.

Others from M.G.M. this term were that pleasant team, George K. Arthur and Karl Dane in "China Bound"; Ramon Novarro in "The Pagan"; Norma Shearer with Ralph Graves and George Sidney in "The Latest from Paris"; Elliott Nugent in "So This is College"; Lon Chaney in a great adventure film "West of Zanzibar"; William Haines and Anita Page in "Navy Blues". I have very happy memories of this one. We, of course, ran the silent version, but "Navy Blues" was also issued either as a talkie or with sound. It had a splendid theme tune, "Navy Blues", which we had on a record, and I still have that record. It amazes me that this lively, martial tune, has never turned up again down the years. Tim McCoy in "Sioux Blood"; William Haines and Josephine Dunn in "A Man's Man". Yet another this term was Joan Crawford, Nils Aster, and Anita Page in "Our Dancing Daughters", an M.G.M. film, though we actually played this one from Leytonstone, and certainly a copy which had been stolen from some cinema. "Our Dancing Daughters" was one of three films, all following the same family and with the same stars. The first was "Our Modern Maidens", which had been released before the lion was making his (silent then) roar on our screen. Finally, a little later on, came yet another sequel "Our Blushing Brides" which we played, and which I shall mention again when the time comes.

Also from M.G.M., who released the Hal Roach comedies, came our first Charley Chase comedy "Imagine my Embarrassment, and, at intervals, as the term progressed, two more Chase comedies "The Big Squawk" and "Snappy Sneezer". Also our third Laurel and Hardy comedy "Early to Bed."

Another comedian who featured in a number of our 2-reel comedies during this year was one named Sid Smith. I can't recall him at all, but I recollect that his pictures were very funny indeed and our audiences loved them. These may have been Hal Roach, but more likely I think they were Wardour releases. We had quite a few Gaumont Special Comedies round this time, one of them being Ben Turpin in "Two Lonely Knights".

From W. & F. came Betty Balfour in "The Sea Urchin", which, I'm sure, was charming like all the Balfour films. From Universal came Reginald Denny in "One Hysterical Night"; Hoot Gibson in "The Long, Long Trail"; Glen Tryon in "Barnum was Right"; Ken Maynard in his first western for Universal "Senor Americana".

This term, too, we ran two series.

One was "Sporting Youth" which was of about ten episodes, and "The Head-Hunters", a series of documentaries which ran to eight episodes.

* *

The Postman Called

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

LES ROWLEY (Truro): Freeman Wills Croft was one of my favourite authors and your editorial throws new light upon this gifted man. I little realised when I lived on St. Catherine's Hill, Guildford, that he lived so near at Normandy. As you say, Guildford was lovely. Is it as lovely now? I wonder.

GEOFFREY WILDE (Leeds): Though nobody has made any comment that I have so far heard, I am sure our Nelson Lee fans must have noticed the recently-released Walt Disney film called "The Island at the Top of the World". Featuring as it does an airship and a lost Viking-period civilisation situated in a volcanic region near the North Pole, its parallels with E. S. Brooks' Northestria series are striking. Indeed, it is hard to believe that the story can be completely free of a conscious debt to Brooks, whether acknowledged or not.

Incidentally, I am rather inclined to agree with John Wallen's view, expressed in your latest issue, that the Magnet's Brazil series has been generally under-rated. In terms of over-all balance and proportion I feel the India series is perhaps the finest of all; the 1927 South Seas series is also excellent. In all honesty I think it should be admitted that the China series flags at times in its earlier stages. Its faults are forgiven and its unique fame accorded to it because it moves so unforgettably to a spell-binding climax. Later travel stories seemed to be written rather more to a formula, and much therefore depends upon the freshness of individual incidents and on the conviction with which the background is portrayed and woven into the story. By this test I have found the Brazil series comes out well; in my experience it can be re-read with considerable enjoyment. And Mr. Wallen is surely justified in pointing out that the problems which made Valentine's own series an interesting character-study no longer existed in the later series; the boy who had made a new life for himself in Brazil was inevitably a different person in many respects.

BILL LOFTS (London): The A. P. Robin Hood Library along with Detective, Prairie Libraries was a curious affair. H. W. Twyman edited the former before he took over Union Jack. I can well remember him telling me the whole story behind these ventures, and the hideous colour printing involved. All three Libraries were a stop-gap to give returned servicemen (e.g. Twyman and Len Pratt) jobs. Len Pratt of course became editor of the S. B. L. in 1919. It was an Australian, Coutts Brisbane (Coutts Armour) who wrote all the Robin Hood tales. In later life I was told that with his flowing long hair and small beard he resembled Robin Hood himself, and he was a colourful character.

B. W. REVELEY (Australia): As an avid reader of most of the boys' papers of the 1920's, I find the articles in C. D. absolutely fasincating. I especially enjoyed the articles about the old cinemas, as I remember the old Sebright in the back alleys of Hackney Road and Smarts (as we called it) in Bethnal Green Road.

MRS. J. PACKMAN (East Dulwich): A very good issue of C. D. as always. I particularly liked your remarks about Freeman Wills Crofts. I still have a few copies of his tales. Len and I read them in the early 30's and Inspector French was one of my favourite detectives. I always did like those detailed stories, and Mr. Crofts tales were on a par with those of R. Austin Freeman of Dr. Thorndyke fame. Alas, no-one writes tales like that in these days.

H. P. CLARK (Nuneaton): I would like to mention the great pleasure "The Letters of Frank Richars" gave me. Rarely have I enjoyed anything so much. They brought only one regret. I had always intended to write to Frank Richards, but never got round to doing so. I realise now I would have received a reply which I would have treasured for the rest of my life.

Well, we all have some regrets, don't we? Take, for instance, those Magnets and Nelson Lees I bought in the 1920's. I gave them away to someone I thought would enjoy reading them, little realising the value they would acquire in years to come. I learned later that this astute young man had taken them straight to a stall in the market and sold them.

Once more my thanks to you and the contributors for a splendid C.D. annual, and also for C.D., the arrival of which is the highlight of the month.

* *

News of the Clubs

CAMBRIDGE

Meeting held on 9th February, 1975

Bill Lofts reported that the biography of Charles Hamilton, by himself and Derek Adley, "The World of Frank Richards" was in the press.

Theme of the meeting was "mystery items" - members spoke on any subjects of personal interest. Bill Lofts led with a talk on "steam trains", and members were reluctant to leave the subject. Vic Hearn followed with his experiences of spiritualism, which led to a discussion on poltergeists, fake mediums, and general philosophical thoughts. Bill Thurbon, a "gun buff", talked about the variety of guns used in boys' stories, stressing the influence of Rider Haggard on other writers. Danny Posner displayed a number of items he had recently purchased for his new shop, and members revelled in old film magazines and comics.

A novel item was given by Neville Wood, who had written and tape-recorded a short story; ghost, mystery, fantasy - we were puzzled how to define it - but we agreed it was fascinating.

Finally, Jack Overhill gave a talk on Bill Gander and the Story Paper Collector, quoting from his correspondence and stressing the debt the hobby owed to Bill.

It was felt that future meetings might be more open-ended, allowing discussion to flow freely, and to extend programmes over more than one meeting.

This gathering ended with a vote of thanks to Danny and Olly Posner for their hospitality, with special pleasure at having Danny with us, since he had risen from a sick bed to take part.

* * *

NORTHERN

Saturday, 8 February, 1975

We continued our discussion of last month as to the form our Jubilee celebrations should take. Our plan at present is to have a dinner at an hotel in or near Leeds. Possibly the date would be Saturday, 7 June. We hope that all will be arranged so that details may be given in next month's C. D.

Geoffrey Good read to us the first chapter of the first of the Bunter Books - 'Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School', remarking on the delight with which we hailed this continuation of the Greyfriars saga when it was first published in 1947. Perhaps, said Geoffrey, the Bunter Books never quite attained the superb quality of the Magnet, yet we should be all the poorer without them.

* * *

LONDON

The Twenty-Seventh Annual General Meeting took place on Sunday, 16th February, at the East Dulwich home of Josie Packman. It was her last time in the chair as Winifred Morss was duly elected for the ensuing year. Rest of officers were all willing to serve another term.

"Canadian Capers" was the title of a short treatise about the members in the Dominion and was given by Ben Whiter. Chief points of interest were about Bernard and Berenice Thorne and their very fine Nelson Lee articles in the Story Paper Collector.

With help from Ray Hopkins, who did valuable research, Mary Cadogan read a paper entitled "The Lesser Known Detectives." The latter were all taken from girls papers.

Ray Hopkins obliged with a humorous reading from the Holiday Annual of 1940, which featured Lovell's crib.

From the C. D. of March 1949, Josie Packman read of the visit she together with Len and Eleanor, made to the home of Frank Richards whilst on holiday at Broadstairs. Also in the same issue was the mention of the first appearance of the club badge which Bob Whiter designed.

Josie was thanked for her readings, her term of office in the chair and for the excellent catering.

Next meeting at 49 Lyonsdown Avenue, New Barnet, Herts., on Sunday, 16th March. Kindly inform Mrs. Anne Bradford, either by letter or phone, 449 2525, if intending to be present.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

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HOW TO BECOME A JOURNALIST

by S. Gordon Swan

Browsing through the old periodicals can be very rewarding as one often finds material of interest to present-day readers. In a volume of "Chums", the famous boys' paper, for the year 1898, I found several paragraphs of this nature. To be more specific, they were in issues No. 297, dated 18th May, 1898, and included in a page entitled "The Editor to his Chums", in which the editor answered various correspondents.

"... An answer to Mr. Wodehouse, of Dulwich, who asks me: 'How can one become a journalist?' One can become a journalist, Mr. Wodehouse, only if Providence has willed it. The first requisite is, not only that a man shall be able to write about the things he sees and hears, but that he shall be able to write about them in such a way that other people will be interested in his work. If he has this gift, the rest is easy. People find it so hard to get on in journalism because so many of them have not the gifts of the born journalist. If a man can write, editors will soon discover the fact and wish to employ him. It is the man who cannot write who is the nuisance to them. He deluges them and the waste-paper basket with his hopeless productions. He is on the wrong tack, to put it very bluntly, and his career can be but one of disappointment and of failure.

"Let us assume in charity, however, that Mr. Wodehouse has some of the gifts which go to make a pleasing writer. In that case he should begin by studying the columns of some journal which buys the kind of work he thinks he can write best. When he begins to understand what kind of contribution the editor is in the habit of accepting, let him sit down to his article. His first efforts should be brief; they should be bright; and they should deal with some subject a little out of the common. In this way they are likely to catch the editor's eye, and the author of them to begin a career in which every subsequent step will be in the right direction to recognition and to profitable employment."

The interest in this long-forgotten item lies, not in its advice to a would-be writer, but in speculation as to the applicant's identity. Could this "Mr. Wodehouse" have been the one and only P.G., who in 1898 would have been about seventeen and virtually unknown in the literary world? In view of the uncommon surname, the query about journalism and the fact that he began his career writing boys' school stories in the early years of the twentieth century, it is not improbable. If it was another Mr. Wodehouse altogether, it is a remarkable coincidence.

* *

"Disposing large stock original boys papers, comics, newspapers, including Boys' Realm, Boys' Herald, Boys' Friend (WW1, and previous), Hotspur, Wizard, Champion, Rover, Adventure, Jingles, Tip-Top, Knockout, Radio Fun (1946-1952), Girls Own Paper (1930's), Rover, Adventure, Skipper annuals (1930's), Aldine Half Holiday (c 1908), Street and Smith's 1920's paperbacks, mainly Nick Carter and Frank Merriwell (USA), Chatterbox annuals (early 1900's), Young Ladies Journal (1860's), Scout (c 1908/09), Chums (1890's to 1920's), Little Folks annuals (early 1900's), Gem (1908 and 1930's), Meccano and Boys' Own Paper (1950's), Collectors Digests (1950's to 1970's), Young England annuals (c WW1), plus many varied items, London Gazettes (1690's), Strand Magazine (1890's), Wide World (1940's to 1960's), Saturday Magazine (1830's), Play Pictorial (1903-1919), The Times (1830's to 1945), London Chronicle (1760's), Picturegoer, Pictureshow (1950's), BBC yearbooks (1930's), Dicken's Household Words, Once A Week, and All Year Round (Late Victorian), plus host of other items for cash, or exchange (Antiques or useful articles like car stereo, cassette tape recorder, car radio, projector).

ED JONES, 43 DUNDONALD ROAD, COLWYN BAY, CLWYD.

Tel. 0492-31195

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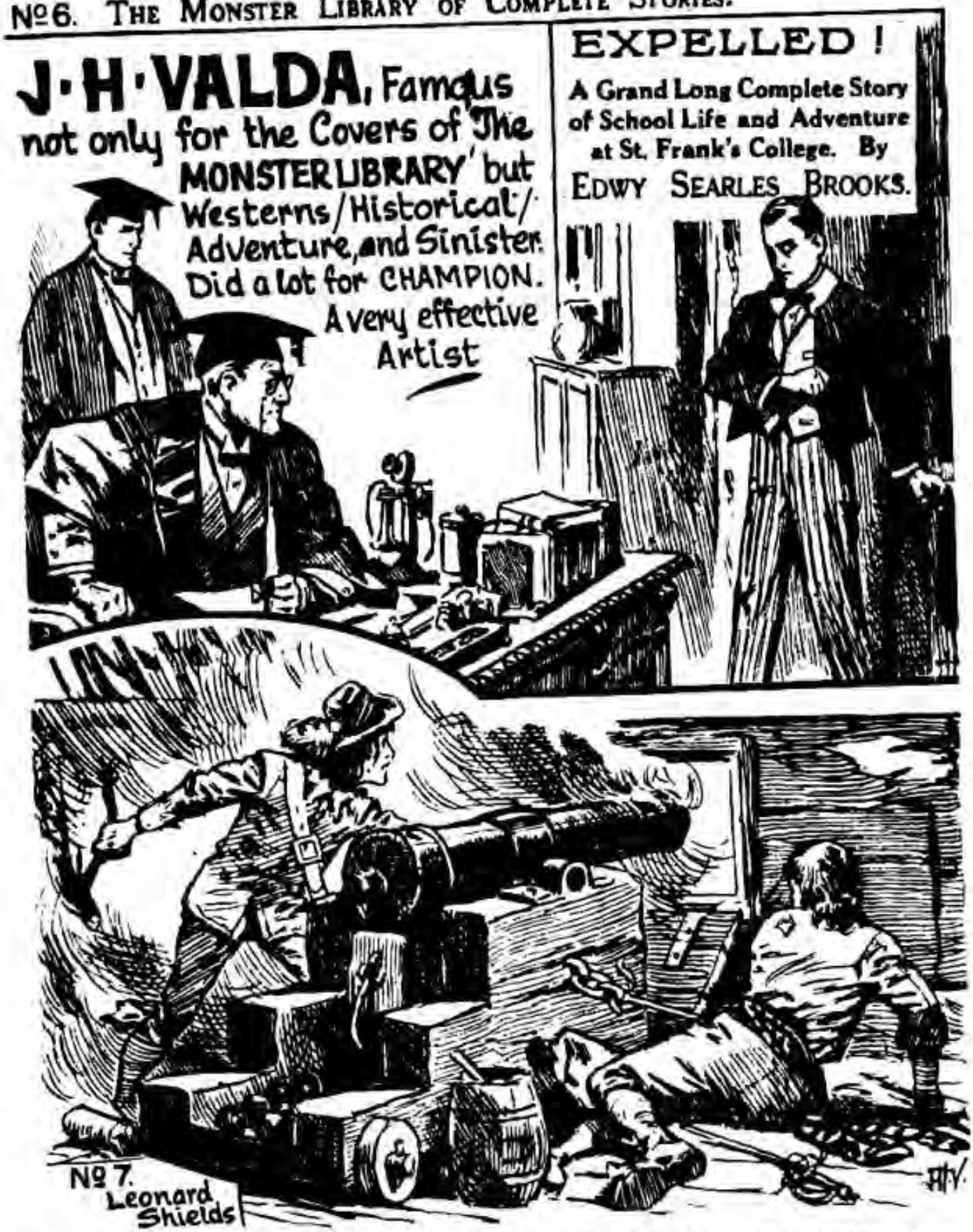

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