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COLLECTORS DIGEST

VOL. 38 No. 447 MARCH 1984

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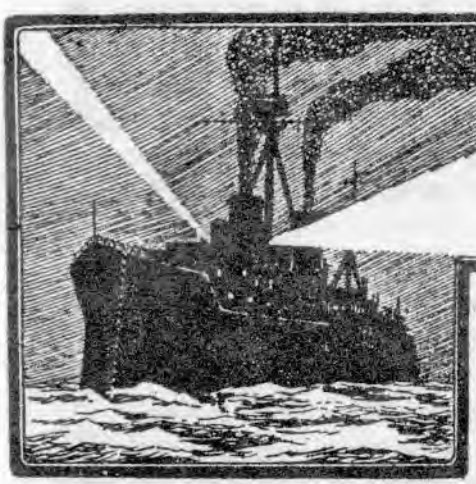

A Word from the Skipper.

Memory is the treasury of all things - and their guardian

THE VANISHING HA'PENNY

So they are doing away with the humble ha'penny, after its existence in our coinage for many hundreds of years. It is to follow the tanner, the half-crown, and the florin with which we spent most of our lives. Governments, whatever their colour, never bother about tradition these days.

Of course, the modern ha'penny is worth very little, except in the supermarkets and the post office. And we are told that people, presented with a ha'penny change in the supermarkets, just throw them away and that the supermarket cleaners sweep up dozens of them from the floors every day. I take that with a grain

of salt. I have never thrown one away, nor have I ever seen anybody else do so.

We are assured that it won't cause even minor inflation - quite the reverse, for the supermarkets (and presumably the post office) will "round down" the price of the ha'penny. If we are cynics, it may occur to us that we have heard that one before.

Governments always know best, of course. They know what is good for us. One lot gave us decimal currency, so that the name of the Chancellor who introduced it will live on in revered memory. It caused inflation of staggering magnitude. Another lot gave us the Permissive Society, so that the name of the Home Secretary who did it for us will not be quickly forgotten. It resulted in a wave of sex crimes such as this land of ours had never known. And another lot invented the Goliath type of County/Borough Councils, usually under a modern name, so that the ancient town of Gravesend is now Gravesham. They promised us, I seem to recall, that the giant affairs would eliminate waste and reduce rates. I wonder whether it has happened.

Of course, few of us in 1984 will really mourn the passing of the ha'penny. We've got too used to even a fiver not being worth a great deal, while as for the pound --

But it is interesting to look back and remember what a ha'penny would buy. There was the ha'penny bar of choc, the ha'penny ice-cream cornet from Mr. Papa's barrow, and the ha' penny everlasting strip. I can't remember whether the everlasting strip was toffee or liquorice. Can you? And the ha'penny sherbet sucker and sherbet dab.

But sweets were here one minute and gone the next. It was the ha'penny periodicals which have lived for ever. They will remain long after we are gone. Among the ha'penny papers at one time there were the Gem, the Magnet, the Union Jack, the Marvel, the Boys' Friend, and lots of others. They were all promoted - double price, double size - after a spell of time. The Empire Library was a ha'penny throughout its entire life of about 2 years.

I don't suppose any of us actually bought a ha'penny Magnet or Gem, etc., when they were new in the shops. Those of my

generation probably got a few, later on, second-hand at a market stall, like I did, or at the 2nd hand shop in Queen Street. But ha'penny comic papers like Butterfly and Merry & Bright and Funny Wonder, lasted longer at the price, and I guess that some of us bought them new.

Just a few of those wonderful A.P. papers were never a ha'penny, but started off at a penny. Boys' Realm was one, Boys' Herald was another, and the Penny Popular was a third. But the aristocrats among boys' papers started off at a ha'penny, and we have them in our collections today because some gentle, sentimental folk cherished them and preserved them long ago.

In passing, the London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway charged a ha'penny a mile for many years, and, up till the railways were nationalised, it was always the cheapest line in the country. Now, of course, they're all cheap. Jimmy Saville tells us so.

REUBEN GODSAVE

I have received many tributes to the memory of Reuben, whose death we recorded last month. I will pick out two and quote from them here.

Jim Cook, now in New Zealand, wrote: "I am deeply sad that my dear, old friend Reuben is no longer with us. His love for the Nelson Lee never wavered down the years. I shall miss him very much. Of late years he has been so much in my thoughts".

Len Wormull wrote: "As a Lee fan I am going to miss Reuben's regular articles. He had a pleasing grasp of the St. Frank's scene, always sincere in his approach, and never afraid to speak his mind when the occasion demanded it. Truly a great loss to the hobby and to C.D.".

It is indeed a blow to our Lee Column, following on the loss of our dear and loyal Nelson Lee friend, Bob Blythe, some time ago. As I mentioned last month, Reuben was regular with his contributions and any Editor's joy. And even more important, his items were always restrained in length, varied, and carefully set out. He never queried an editorial decision, nor complained if there was a delay in the publication of some of his work.

We still have in hand one or two as yet unpublished articles from his pen, and they will appear in due course, all being well. From now on more work will fall on the remaining band of Lee fans to keep the Lee flag waving.

We shall miss Reuben, as we miss Bob Blythe. They live on in our memory.

THANKS TO READERS

I have had a very heavy mail-bag this month. My grateful thanks to all who have written.

THE EDITOR

* *

Danny's Diary

MARCH 1934

My brother, Doug, has bought a copy of the new Post Office Guide. Goodness knows why he wants it, though he says it contains a lot of useful information. I learn from it that letter cost 1½d for 2 ounces; postcards are 1d; and printed matter is ½d for 2 ounces. As if I didn't know!

A good month in the Gem. The opening two stories of the month concern rivalry between St. Jim's and the Grammar School. There is no mention of Gordon Gay, and the leader of the Grammarians is Frank Monk, who is the son of the Headmaster, Dr. Monk. These two tales are very good of their type. They are entitled "Rival Raggers" and "What Price Victory?".

After these two came a story about Joe Frayne entitled "The Boy Who Ran Away". Joe knows who kicked a football in the face of Mr. Selby. Joe is to suffer regular lickings from the awful Mr. Selby till he betrays the footer-kicker. Joe solves the problem in his own way. Nice little tale.

Next come two linked stories entitled "The Outsider" and the sequel "The Fire Raiser". The "outsider" is a man named Mr. Browning-Jones who opens a private school near St. Jim's, much to

the annoyance of Tom Merry & Co. Mr. B-J has eleven boys in his school. However, B-J wins the good opinion of Tom Merry & Co. when Tom Merry and Gore are in peril on the river, and the schoolmaster, by a brave deed, saves them. In the sequel, the private school is burned down, and the 11 Boys go to St. Jim's while Mr. B-J looks round for new premises. But one of the boys is a fire-raiser - his name is Stansen - and he tries to start a fire at St. Jim's. He is what they call an arsonist. The boy goes to a mental home, and Standen's father pays for new premises for the little school. A novel pair, this couple of tales.

There is a naughty boy named Snipe coming in to some of the Gem stories, and I hadn't heard of him before.

In the Boat Race, Cambridge beat Oxford by $4\frac{1}{2}$ lengths. The race was run in 18 mins. 3 secs. A friend and I went to see the race, and then we went to the First House at Putney Hippodrome where we saw a good variety bill. Top of the bill were G. H. Elliott, the chocolate-coloured coon as he calls himself; Gertie Gitana who sang "Nellie Dean" and some other songs, and Ted Ray who was "whistling and fooling". It was late when we got to our homes, and my Mum was not pleased about it.

I had a Ranger this month. The tale I bought it for was "The Cheerio Gastaways". About Jim Dainty & Co. of Grimslade. Six boys and their Headmaster are marooned on a tropical island, and have all sorts of adventures, rather after the style of King of the Islands but not nearly so good. There are 6 other short stories in the Ranger, but it is not really the paper for me.

Two good tales in the Schoolboys' Own Library this month. "Harry Wharton & Co. in New York" is just splendid. A crowd of chums, including Bunter and Lord Mauleverer and Coker are the guests of Fisher T. Fish's father, on their way to Hollywood where, unknown to Dr. Locke, who has given permission for the trip, they are to make a talkie on school life. This one tells of some exciting affairs in New York on the way.

The other S.O.L. is "The Wizard of St. Frank's". Ezra Quirke is a new boy, who is a magician who startles the school with his knowledge of the Occult. Creepy tale.

In the Cup Final at Wembley, in the presence of the King, Manchester City beat Portsmouth.

A truly marvellous month in the local cinemas. I don't think I can remember any month when there have been so many tip-top films on in the space of 4 weeks. "Dinner at Eight" is terrific. They call it a portmanteau film, for it has a host of stars and a number of stories. In this case, a number of people are spending a week-end at the lush hotel, and it shows how their separate lives get linked. The cast includes Marie Dressler, John Barrymore, Jean Harlow, Billie Burke, Lionel Barrymore, Wallace Beery, Madge Evans, May Robson, and others. With this one was "Towed in the Hole", one of the best Laurel and Hardy two-reelers I have ever seen.

Another "portmanteau" film was a British one, "Friday the Thirteenth", and this is even better than "Dinner at Eight". A number of people are in a bus crash, and the film shows how the different ones came to be on the bus. The stars are Jessie Matthews, Sonnie Hale, Ralph Richardson, Emlyn Williams, Frank Lawton, Edmund Gwenn, Gordon Harker, Robertson Hare, and lots more.

"The Wandering Jew", starring Conrad Veidt, is a good British picture, if a bit heavy. George Arliss in "Voltaire" is very good indeed, set in France of a hundred years ago. Cicely Courtneidge is very funny indeed in "Aunt Sally", and with this one they had the lovely Disney cartoon "Three Little Pigs".

Perhaps my favourite of all is "Ring Up the Curtain", the story of a family on the variety stage early in the century. Some lovely tunes, and a warm story. The stars are Alice Brady (she is marvellous), Micky Rooney, Frank Morgan, and tons of others. Just wonderful. Finally "Turn Back the Clock" starring Lee Tracy and Mae Clarke. The hero envies his rich friend. He wishes he had married his friend's wife instead of the girl he actually married. There is an accident, and the hero, in a long dream, lives his life again, this time each marrying the other woman. He finds out what MIGHT have happened if he had married the girl he has always wanted. I just loved every minute of this one.

Finally, a pleasant little British comedy, "Turkey Time"

with Tom Walls and Ralph Lynn. A great month.

"King of the Islands started off the month in Modern Boy with "King of the Islands' Last Chance". Ken is in terrific danger as, at last, he lays hands on the precious Pink Coral. The fortune is there - but it seems likely that his bones may remain there, too.

Next week, in "Comrades of the Ketch", Kit Hudson comes to the rescue of his skipper. At the end of the story the comrades are united once again. Then came "South Seas Treasure". For Ken King there are great lumps of Pink Coral for the taking, but Ken is in the thick of Trouble with a capital "T".

Next we had "The Fire-Ship". In this one, it looks as though, if they escape death by roasting, the chums will be blown up by the dynamite-tipped arrows shot over by their enemies.

The last story of the month is "White Flag - and Black Death". A horror lies hidden aboard the ketch - a tiny thing, black as night, with a single crimson spot. Its bite is terrible death - and that bite is meant for Ken King.

The Captain Justice series has continued all the month.

Exciting things in real-life, too. John Dillinger, gangster and public-enemy-Number-One, has escaped from prison in the United States. And the police, who managed to put him away, are by no means pleased, according to the newspapers.

Viscount Lascelles, the husband of Princess Mary, has had an operation on his neck, but is going on well.

The gorgeous Magnet kicked off this month with a single story "Who Walloped Wingate?". An enemy will stop at nothing to get revenge on the popular Captain of Greyfriars. That enemy was Price of the Fifth.

Then came the start of a series starring Vernon-Smith, the Bounder. This was "The Mystery of the Head's Hat". Somebody put ink in the Head's topper. There is an open verdict at the end. Next came "Disowned by his Father". The Bounder has been in constant trouble for a long time past, and the Bounder's father loses patience and threatens to disown his son in favour of a nephew, Lucius Teggers. And Lucius Teggers comes to Greyfriars as

a master, calling himself Mr. Smedley. He is "The Bounder's Rival" of the 3rd tale of the series.

Final of the month is "The Form-Master's Secret". If the Bounder is completely disgraced at school, Lucius Teggers will be the millionaire's heir. And "Mr. Smedley" is determined that Smithy shall be so disgraced. Marvellous series. I hope it goes on nearly for ever.

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NOTES ON THIS MONTH'S "DANNY'S DIARY"

S.O.L. No. 215 "Harry Wharton & Co. in New York" comprise the first three tales of the 16-story Hollywood Series, which is so memorable from the very early days of the Magnet of 1929. S.O.L. No. 216 "The Wizard of St. Frank's" is the famous story of Ezra Quirke which appeared in the N.L.L. in 1926. The late Bob Blythe considered that this series was Brooks's greatest achievement. This is one of the very few S.O.L.'s not in my collection, but, from the fact that in the Lee the series consisted of 9 stories in 1926, it is either very heavily pruned in this format, or , more likely, it consists of just a few episodes of same.

In 1907 Charles Hamilton, cashing in on the enormous popularity of Tom Merry, had written two very long original stories for the Boys' Friend 3d Library. These were entitled "Tom Merry & Co.", published late in 1907, and "Tom Merry's Conquest", published early in 1908. In April 1911, the latter story, "Tom Merry's Conquest", was divided into two issues of the Gem under the titles "The Rival Schools" and Saints versus Grammarians", the adaptation from one long story into two normal-length Gem tales being done by Hamilton himself. As, by 1911, Gordon Gay had long been on the scene as the leading junior at Rylcombe Grammar School, first in a series by Prosper Howard (who created him) in the Empire Library, and also in many Gem stories, readers must have wondered that he did not appear in these two stories of rivalry between St. Jim's and the Grammar School. These were reprinted in 1934, when Danny read them, as "Rival Raggers" and "What Price Victory?".

(In passing, only a year or two back, the two Boys' Friend Library tales were published by John Wernham and his Hamilton Museum Press. This delightful volume providing hours of unsurpassed reading, is still available and can be obtained direct from Mr. Wernham or from the C.D. office at £5.20 which includes post and packet.)

Of the other Gem stories read by Danny in March 1934, "The Boy Who Ran Away" had been entitled "The Runaway" in early 1911. "The Outsider" had been named "The Schoolmaster's Rescue" of the same period in 1911. The sequal, "The Fire-Raiser", which followed on in 1934, had, for some reason, been separated from the first tale by two other linked stories in 1911 when it had been entitled "Burnt Out".

"Who Walloped Wingate?" turned out to be the only Magnet single story in 1934.

* *

MAGNETS: 622, 1053, 1069, 1070, 1074, 1669 - 1683 inclusive. Baker copies 1546, 1243. Schoolboys' Own 400, 411.
GEMS: 1645, 1641. Fair condition. All £12 plus postage.
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BLAKIANA

by Josie Packman

One might almost think that I have been writing for the Nelson Lee section of the C.D. but these stories and the part of the article written by the late Walter Webb certainly brought Sexton Blake, Tinker, Nelson Lee and Nipper into contact with each other and very enjoyable were the stories by E. S. Brooks for the Union Jack introducing Nelson Lee and creating a very friendly atmosphere amongst all our favourite characters. The last part of the Story of Tinker by Walter Webb, will appear in the April Blakiana.

THE STORY OF TINKER continued — by Walter Webb

In the "Boys' Friend", the issue being that published the week ending 21 June, 1913, (No. 628) the story of Tinker's big case, under the title of "Tinker Abroad" was published in serial form. Written by Cecil Hayter and with illustrations by J. Abney Cummings famous for his pictures of Jack, Sam and Pete in the "Marvel", it described Tinker's relentless pursuit across land and sea of a gang of criminals responsible for his famous master's disappearance. Believing Blake to have been killed by the crooks, Tinker became obsessed with only one idea - to avenge the death of the man who had meant so much to him.

But, of course, Blake was not killed; ultimately he was to wage successful war against such kings of crime George Marsden Plummer, Dr. Huxton Rymer, Prince Wu Ling, Leon Kestrel, Zenith the Albino, Waldo the Wonder man, Mr. Reece, Professor Kew, and many others, and in those titanic battles Tinker was to be a trusty and invaluable ally at his side. The lad, under Blake's expert tuition, became a master in the art of shadowing, and it was in this role that above all else, his master found him most useful.

A somewhat strange fact about Tinker is that, despite his full and adventurous life, he made hardly any friends of his own age after leaving Telford. Blake made many who are well known; Coutts, Dirk Dolland, Splash Page, Hon. John Lawless, Sir Richard Losely and others - but apart from his brief and whirlwind romance with Nirvana and even briefer association with Topper, where were

Tinker's young friends? It was perhaps a craving for the companionship of boys about his own age that set his feet in the direction of St. Franks when Blake had no need of his services. One of those occasions happened just prior to a Christmas vacation when Nelson Lee was drawing the net tightly round a crook, known as Mr. Howard Martin, who had been engaged as Headmaster of St. Franks in the temporary absence of Dr. Malcolm Stafford. Under cover of his honourable position, Mr. Martin had committed several robberies in the surrounding districts. Tinker's arrival at Study C in the Ancient House, greeted with jubilation by Nipper and his closed chums, co-incided with Nelson Lee's denunciation of Mr. Martin, but in saving the life of one of Mr. Martin's unwilling associates from the hand of the schoolmaster-crook, Tinker almost wrecked the final plans of Lee, but fortunately, merely delayed Martin's arrest by Chief Detective Inspector Lennard, their old friend of Scotland Yard. (See Nelson Lee Library No. 236 Old Series, containing the story "Exit the Tyrant" published week-ending 13 December, 1919.)

Immediately following the rounding up of the crooked Headmaster St. Frank's broke up for the Christmas vacation and Tinker along with Sexton Blake, was invited by Lord Dorrimore to spend Yuletide with him at his fine old mansion on the coast of Cornwall. Among the others invited to form the party were Nelson Lee, Nipper, Umlosi the Kutana chief, Handforth and Co., Pitt, de Valerie and several other St. Frank's juniors. In this merry gathering at Cliff Castle, Tinker cast all thoughts of detective work from him and became Tinker the irresponsible schoolboy once again, in which role he was encouraged by his genial host, Dorrie and his popular sister Lady Mornington.

To be concluded next month.

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SEXTON BLAKE AND NELSON LEE

by Josie Packman

I had a letter from one of my Sexton Blake friends asking if any of the early Union Jacks contained stories introducing Nelson

Lee working with Sexton Blake. I knew there some and that I had written an article about them some years ago but a search through my C.D.'s going back several years revealed no trace of the article in question. Must have got lost or mislaid. However I have been through my catalogue and found the stories, so here is a list of them.

Union Jack	No. 768	The Mount Stonham Murder Mystery
" "	No. 771	The Mystic Cypher
" "	No. 774	The Dual Detectives
" "	No. 777	The Flashlight Clue
" "	No. 781	The Case of the American Soldier
" "	No. 784	The Crooks of Rapid Hollow
" "	No. 786	The Terror of Trevis Wold
" "	No. 788	The Studded Footprints
" "	No. 793	The Case of the Hollow Dagger
" "	No. 794	Waldo the Wonder Man
" "	No. 796	Hoodwinked
" "	No. 799	The Clue of the Frozen Knife
" "	No. 831	The Valley of the Missing Men
" "	No. 859	The Mystery of the Gnarled Oak
" "	No. 870	The Mystery of the 9.12 Express

All these appeared in the pink covered Union Jacks and the print is rather small but if anyone should care to read them they can be borrowed from my own collection. These stories were all written by Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks but he did not continue to write them as he must have been very busy with his other tales in both the Union Jack and the Nelson Lee Library.

* *

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: MAGNETS, GEMS, ANNUALS, STORY PAPER COLLECTOR; S.O.L.'s, S.B.L.'s, NELSON LEES, etc.
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* *

WANTED: Good copy of MODERN BOY No. 321 to replace damaged copy in volume. Please write ERIC FAYNE.

Nelson Lee Column

THE SUPERNATURAL by R. J. Godsave

If there was one sphere in which E. S. Brooks excelled it was his writing of the supernatural in the Nelson Lee Library. Two of his most successful were those of Dr. Karnak and Ezra Quirke which featured in the old series. Brooks had the gift of giving his readers a rather frightening glimpse into what is known as the 'spirit world' and then gently bring them back to earth with the most plausible explanations.

The Dr. Karnak series was written in the January of 1924 and bore such fascinating titles as "The Evil Eye of Baal" and "The Curse of the Moon God". Equally fascinating were the tastefully coloured covers, one of which showing two juniors standing on a ledge outside the windows of his rooms and gazing in at Dr. Karnak dancing around a lighted brazier in an effort to call up the spirit of 'Baal'.

Whether such activities induce a self hypnotism is quite possible, there are strange happenings in this world which cannot be explained. Some years ago I attended a private seance at the home of a friend. It was mainly devoted to table raising, that is the table taps out yes or no in answer to questions asked of the spirits. Although somewhat sceptical I was unable to find any form of trickery. I have yet to be given an explanation of how a table can defy the natural laws of gravity without some form of human aid.

Like Dr. Karnak, who used trickery as well as having a belief in the supernatural, Ezra Quirke was guilty of using mechanical aids in his so-called efforts to contact the spirit world. In his case, with the assistance of his uncle, it was a well thought plot to extort money from the Hon. Douglas Singleton. Again, as in the Dr. Karnak series, fascinating titles were used as "The Haunted Form-Room" and "The Cellar of Secrets". Some time later in the Nelson Lee E. S. Brooks wrote of the return of Ezra Quirke.

In this series it appeared that he really had a belief in the supernatural. It is interesting to note that both Dr. Karnak and Quirke had familiars in the shape of a serval cat and owl respectively.

In some respects Brooks wrote over the heads of his youthful readers.

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

By an Old Boy

As I approached the big gates at St. Frank's I could see Josh Cuttle, the School porter, gazing up intently at the contrails left by a passing plane overhead.

He didn't even see me as I passed through.

Evidently he was gloomily predicting all kinds of calamities for mankind as he surveyed the aerial phenonemon.

But I couldn't help but contrast the difference between old Josh and the boys at St. Frank's. The school porter was at one end of life, and the boys at another. The lugubrious Josh Cuttle gives every indication of being at the wrong end!

I met Dr. Brett at the entrance to the Ancient House. The good doctor is on a retainer fee at the School, and he was making one of his periodic visits - his only patient he told me, was Biggleswade of the 6th, who was in the Sanny with 'flu. The grip of winter has descended very leniently on the inmates of St. Frank's.

But even winter doesn't detract from the beauty, the lovely scenes around the School's environs. When I have occasion to visit during summer and stay till evening I have often been reminded of Thomas Grey's Elegy in a country churchyard as I have seen Farmer Holt's lowing herd winding slowly o'er the lea, and a ploughman homeward plodding his weary way.

This is the England I will always remember. It exemplifies the Old Country to the returning expatriate who sought fresh woods and pastures new, but returned to his homeland defeated.

* * *

It is a very long time since St. Frank's had a new headmaster. But history records some very unpleasant and eccentric headmasters who have come to St. Frank's to alter the curriculum

and rules. Nipper was remarking on this hiatus between new Heads, but Dr. Stafford is still very much active and healthy to retire just yet. This applies to the Form masters. So it looks as if the old School will have to carry on the even tenor of its way. As winter settles in and sporting fixtures played out the juniors will have sufficient excitement to occupy their minds. Yet sometimes coming events cast their shadows and a period of turmoil sets in. It has happened before and no doubt will occur again.

I mention this following a talk with Nelson Lee who has been advised professor Zingrave is about again.

Mr. Lee's old enemy has vowed never to rest while the school-master detective lives. Zingrave has broken a lance with Lee at St. Frank's before and failed.

So while the wintry calm settles over St. Frank's and thoughts of a far distant summer lie dormant like cricket bats, while Zingrave is loose it behoves Nelson Lee and Nipper to be alert and vigilant.

Perhaps it is significant that Eileen Dare has postponed a visit to St. Frank's. Nelson Lee's lady assistant, I am told, has remained in London upon a sudden decision.

* *

"JUST WILLIAM" fans!

A meeting of afficiandos of the exploits of William Brown, is being organised at the Strathdon Hotel, Nottingham, on Saturday, 28th April, 1984. We are having an informal meeting from 11.00 a.m. until approximately 6.00 p.m. Bring items from your collection.
Cost of attendance: £3.00.
Special speakers who will be with us: Mrs. Richmal Ashbee (niece of Richmal Crompton), Mary Cadogan, Bill Lofts and Marjorie Fisher(daughter of Thomas Henry).
Full details from: HAPPY HOURS UNLIMITED - 22 Woodnook Close, Leeds, LS16 6PQ.

THE WAY OF UNCLE JAMES By Ernest Holman

Jimmy Silver's probable image is of an easy-going nature, long-suffering and always ready to smile. A great injustice will be done if Uncle James is to be left with only these descriptions. Jimmy also had a great sense of justice, was prepared to have the courage of his convictions and 'do his own thing' if he felt it was right. Let us look into the preserved archives of the Diarist, Daniel.

Jimmy had his first brush with authority soon after arriving at Rookwood. In protest at the unhappy control of the Classical Side by Modern Masters (ALL the former Staff had contracted influenza) Jimmy organised a barring-out; in that sensible spot, the Tuckshop. When. Dr. Chisholm was forced to resign on a later occasion, Jimmy was leader in shutting up the new Head in the School Hall. Profiteering by Sergeant Kettle sent Jimmy collecting funds for the purpose of starting a rival Tuckshop.

Barring himself into his own study was Jimmy's next action, when unfairly expelled. Later, an act of injustice by Mr. Manders prompted Jimmy to 'invite' various guests to tea with the Modern Master, at succeeding times.

When the Head was prevented from expelling Lattrey, Jimmy led the movement that resulted in the boys themselves carrying out the action. As soon as Lattrey returned, Jimmy and Co. entrenched themselves in the school allotment (avoiding damage to the Home Front War Effort, one hoped!) and rebellion was rife. When Lattrey 'saved his face' it was Jimmy who tested him to show the genuineness of reform.

Mr. Bootles believed Jimmy when the latter, up for a flogging, said he was not guilty. The Form Master interfered in the matter and was promptly dismissed by the Head. Jimmy and Co. backed up Mr. Bootles and the real culprit was made to confess. The imperious Dr. Chisholm then refused to reinstate Mr. Bottles, and the Masters accordingly decided to withdraw from the school. The matter was finally resolved, after Jimmy undertook a campaign to get rid of the new Staff. After that, Jimmy was instrumental in reviving the Rookwood Secret Society, when up against Carthew and Knowles.

The school confined to Rookwood over the Christmas holidays, with Manders in charge, was caused by another of those 'flu epidemics. Jimmy was expelled by Manders, escaped his escort and returned to start one more barring-out. Dalton, also dismissed by Manders, tood a hand; when the school was back to normal, Manders took a belated holiday.

Jimmy next came up against the new football coach, whom he suspected of being a cracksman. Of course, it was one of those 'double' situations and Jimmy soon got after the truth. Expulsion was Jimmy's lot again soon afterwards. When Mr. Dalton was dismissed, a new Master was tarred and feathered. Jimmy got the 'boot' as ring-leader, so the Fourth took possession of the river Island for another rebellion. Again, Dalton came to the rescue and, as before, he and Jimmy returned to Rookwood.

The Rookwood saga was nearing its end in the Boys' Friend but there was still time for one more act of defiance. Horace Greely, the latest dismissal from the school, became Head of a new school near Rookwood. The new Establishment was promptly placed out of bounds; accordingly, first the Fifth Form, then Jimmy and Co., joined Mr. Greely. Eventually, everyone returned to the 'calm' of Rookwood.

It was Jimmy Silver who not only took Cinderella Rookwood to the Ball but provided much of the music for dancing. In whatever calling he eventually embraced, Jimmy would have been a great success; he would have selected it, not drifted into it. Just as in his Rookwood days, Jimmy Silver would have made his presence felt!

* *

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 243. THE SENSITIVE SPOT

Our distinguished contributors often introduce a theme which provides great interest and evokes responses from other readers. Just the sort of thing which pleases us, here at Collectors' Digest. The most recent of these contributors is Mr. Tommy Keen who

wrote of the sense of unease he experienced from the various "kickings" which took place at the Hamilton school, with the spotlight particularly on the occasion when Harry Wharton picked up more kicks than ha'pence over his part in the Lancaster affair. Mr. Keen also was dubious about boys who had their heads knocked on walls, or, sometimes, when a couple of boys had their heads banged together.

In reply to this, Mr. Truscott suggested, the following month, that Mr.Keen is too tender-hearted, and he likened the kickings and the head bangings to what happens in the Tom and Jerry cartoons. "We have to accept their world; it is no good putting them into ours", suggested Mr. Truscott, and added that nobody gets hurt.

In fact, it is a slightly false premise. Boys who have their heads banged together, or knocked against walls, clearly must be hurt,while whether one is hurt by being kicked probably depends on how hard the attacker kicks.

This month, Mr. Rowley agrees with Mr. Truscott, and adds that the world of Greyfriars is not the real world, which can hardly be gainsaid.

My personal view is that it is a mistake to be oversensitive over those matters at the Hamilton schools. My own complaint, if I complain at all, is that the kickings and the headbangings are just not true to life. I reckon I was a fairly normal boy at school, but I do not recollect ever being kicked (apart from the football field), nor, I am sure, did any bully ever bang my head. What the bully did, though, was to punch one on the arm muscle, which could be very painful indeed, but, probably, not dangerous.

In all my long career as a schoolmaster I cannot recall one occasion of a boy kicking another deliberately, like they did in the Magnet, nor do I remember one single instance of head-banging. Kicking and head-banging were among the things which were just "not done". True, schoolmasters don't always know everything that is going on, but, in a well-run school, the masters know far more than their boys give them credit for.

The kickings, and especially the constant kicking of Harry Wharton by seniors, has just a slightly sadistic touch, and a touch of sadism did occur just now and then in the Hamilton story, especially in earlier days. A toning down would have improved matters, even if it is carping to be over-sensitive.

One such occasion occurred in the Magnet in "The Only Way" in 1911. Courtney took a flogging from Sir Hilton Popper, in order to save Valence (who had a pretty sister, Vi.). That flogging is related in detail, and Sir Hilton is shown as an uncomfortably evil sadist. A less-sadistic flogging would have answered the purpose of the author just as well. Possibly it caused no qualms to boy readers - most children have a slight touch of sadism which is controlled in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases - and itis likely that adults reading it later may be the slightly uneasy ones.

"The Only Way" was never reprinted by the A.P. to the best of my memory, which was a great pity for it was, overall, a truly splendid school story. Most of the early Magnet tales turned up again in the Penny Popular or the later Popular, but not that one. In passing, many years ago we serialised it in C.D.

A second occasion, a really worse example, was in "His False Position" in the Gem of late 1911. I have referred to it before in this column. Monteith is in the habit of going for sprints, in the quadrangle, after dark, clad only in running vest and shorts. Levison stretches a cord between two trees for the senior to trip over, and places a heap of broken glass for him to fall into.

It is a shuddery little episode, and it is unnecessary. A heap of garbage or muck for the senior to fall in would have been every bit as effective for the author's purpose.

That story was only reprinted once - in the Penny Popular of 1918. It was omitted in the Gem's reprint period, and the omission may have been due to that nasty little episode. Which was a pity, for it is a fine school story.

The kicking and the head-bangings show that Hamilton, though he wrote so beautifully about schools and was the greatest writer of such tales, really had no practical experience of schools.

Mr. Truscott and Mr. Rowley suggest that the world of Grey-

friars is not our world. But, you know, it was our world when we were young. Surely most of us aped the characters we loved so much, and tried, at times, to be like them. I believe we did. I recall that when I was a very young schoolmaster I even modelled myself on Mr. Quelch. It didn't last - but what does?

To liken our reactions to Greyfriars to our reactions to Tom and Jerry is a bit absurd, in my view. There is no comparison. Neither world was real, Mr. Truscott suggests. But, for many of us, Greyfriars and St. Jim's were very real. I may add that I doubt whether any of us was harmed by those little violent bits.

A thought. Perhaps, after all, WE are the Toms and Jerrys. With our adult criticism we knock Greyfriars or St. Jim's apart, and then they come together again like magic, and we love them more than ever.

* *

TOM MERRY CAVALCADE (Serialised from a Long-Ago C.D. Annual)

1913

"I'm a suffragette, Mr. Chadley", said Lizzie Bland.

"Are you, Lizzie? Good for you!" said the newsagent.

"Militant, of course! I speak at meetings on my afternoons off - and I once threw some flour at a policeman". Lizzie giggled reminiscently. "Mind you, I wouldn't do anything like that woman who chucked herself under the King's horse at the Derby last week. That sort of thing is proper daft, don't you think?"

"Poor soul!" Chadley ran his fingers through his grey-flecked hair. "She gave her life for no purpose, Lizzie. People do not get what they want by hysterical actions of that kind".

"What's Tom Merry up to this week, Mr. Chadley? Young Christ is away at boarding school, and I've got to save the 'Gem' for him every week so that he can read them all when he comes home for his holidays."

Chadley took the proffered penny, and handed over the blue-covered Gem. He said: "A fine tale this week, Lizzie - 'The Scamps of the School'. The Terrible Three get up to all the pranks under the sun. They nearly get landed for a flogging - and they deserve it - but Tom saves a wee kid from being run over by a train, so they're all let off punishment".

"Good old Tom." Lizzie tucked the Gem in her enormous black handbag. "I'll read that tonight, wasting the master's gas, as the old sausage pleases to call it". She sniffed. Well, I'm off to the pictures, Mr. Chadley. I always go in the afternoon, when they give you a free cup of tea and a Thin Lunch biscuit. It's Henry Edwards and Chrissie White in a drama - I forget what it's called - and there's a Keystone comedy. Those Keystone comics fair make me split my sides".

1914

"I'm recalled to the Colours", said Major Venner, "so you won't be seeing me

about for a time. I report at Aldershot tomorrow".

Leslie Chadley lowered the blind in the window of his shop, and turned out one of the gas burners. It was ten-thirty, and closing time. He turned and regarded his last customer of the day.

He asked: "Do you think there is really going to be a war, sir?".

"I don't know, Chadley." The Major's face was grave. "Germany has been preparing for years - the whole country is a giant arsenal. They may be mad enough to start something. If they do, they will be committing suicide. We shall whip them in six months at the longest. At any rate, England is mobilising - and anything may happen. Give me a late 'Star' - and the 'Gem'.

"Another Talbot story this week - 'The Parting of the Ways' - the title's quite appropriate to the international situation, isn't it?" Chadley smiled faintly. "It says at the finish that St. Jim's won't see Talbot again. I'm not really sorry. I liked the Toff tales, but enough's as good as a feast."

"I must admit that I like the Toff", said Major Venner. "I hope we haven't seen the last of him." He held out his hand, and the newsagent gripped it. "Good-bye, Chadley, in case I don't see you for a long time. Let's hope a war won't come, though it will be a bit of mild excitement if it does."

"Good-bye, sir - and good luck", said Chadley.

He locked the shop door after his customer, tore the date, July 31st, off the large calendar behind his counter, and then moved slowly into his silent sitting-room to prepare his lonely supper.

1915

"Do you like the 'United Kingdom' series, Mr. Chadley?" asked Chris Venner. Nearly fifteen years old, he was an attractive youngster in his straw hat and his dark blue blazer with the light blue piping.

"Oh, it's pretty good", said the newsagent. "'A Son of Wales' this week - all about Fatty Wynn. Whom do you reckon they'll have to represent England, Master Chris?"

"Tom Merry for England, of course", said Chris, stoutly. "Who else?"

"Well, Tom Merry has been rather in the background lately", observed Chadley.

"All the same, I bet you it will be Tom Merry for England", said Chris. He picked up the blue-covered paper. "That train crash near Gretna Green was awful, wasn't it? They say that hundreds of soldiers were killed, though it's been hushed up".

"Terrible", agreed the newsagent, "but terrible things happen in war-time, Master Chris. The sinking of the Lusitania last week, for instance. That might even bring American into the war".

Chris grimaced. He said: "Nothing will bring the Yanks into the war - they're too proud to fight. Aren't you glad you didn't go to America after all, Mr. Chad?"

Chadley said, in a low voice: "If Ronnie had lived, he might have been fighting the Germans by now".

A young woman, a paper flag in her hand and a look of determination on her face, strode into the shop.

"Good afternoon", said Chadley. "What can I get for you, Miss?"

"Nothing!" The young woman glared at him. "But you can answer a question for me. Why aren't you in khaki?"

Chadley's jaw dropped, and Chris gazed at her in astonishment.

"I have a present for you, Mr. Bookseller", the young woman added. She threw something down among the pile of papers on the counter. Then, deliverately, she spat on the floor, and flounced out of the shop.

Chadley stood staring at the small object which she had dropped upon the illustration of Fatty Wynn on the cover of the blue Gem.

It was a white feather.

Next Month 1916

REVIEW by Brian Doyle

DICTIONARY OF BRITISH BOOK ILLUSTRATORS

Brigid Peppin & Lucy Micklethwaite
(John Murray - £30)

This excellently-produced reference work, on 20th Century book illustration, covers over 800 illustrators whose work was first published in this country between 1900 and 1975. There are 350 illustrations, biographical information, mentions of style and special subjects, lists of books illustrated and magazines contributed to, and reference bibliographies.

It is, of course, a favourite game of reviewers of this type of book to criticise over who has been omitted rather than praise those who have been included. It happened to me when my own two "Who's Who" books were published some years ago (and I should perhaps mention that these have been cited over 80 times in this work). This review will, I'm afraid, be no exception.

Before coming to the credit side, let me list some of the more glaring omissions. There is no mention of the great Eric Parker, the most famous and prolific illustrator of Sexton Blake from the 1920s until the 1950s, apart from his other work. Omitted too are: Leonard Shields (prolific contributor to "The Magnet", "Schoolfriend", etc.); G. M. Dobson ("Schoolfriend", etc.), Roy Wilson (who drew for numerous comic-papers); James Horrabin (creator of the popular "Happy and Japhet" strip which ran in the London "News Chronicle", 1919-50, and the annuals that appeared 1921-51, as well as illustrating H. G. Wells' "Outline of History", etc.); A. B. Payne (creator of the pictures for B. J. Lamb's "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred" in the "Daily Mirror", 1919-40 and 1947-55, and many annuals, etc.); H. S. Foxwell (who drew the adventures of Tiger Tim and the rest of the Buin Boys in "Rainbow", "Tiger Tim's Weekly", the annuals, etc., as well as "The Hippo Girls" in "Playbox, etc., and also took over the "Teddy Tail" strip, from Folkard, in the "Daily Mail", etc.); George Wakefield (who drew for numerous publications, especially "Film Fun" for which he did the long-running "Laurel and Hardy" back-and-front-covers, until his artist-son Terence took them over); Fred Bennet (contributor to many boys' papers, especially "Chums" and "Scout" and who was the official artist at the 1929 Boy Scouts' World Jamboree); Arthur Jones (prolific artist for "Nelson Lee" (1915-29). "Sexton Blake Library" (doing 566 covers), and "The Thriller", illustrating many early stories and serials by such writers as Wallace, Charteris, Horler and Cheyney); T. M. R. Whitwell (who illustrated 31 full-length serials for "The Captain", all school stories and including P. G. Wodehouse's early stories); E. E. Briscoe (contributor to many boys' publications, and two favourite cartoonists: 'Pont' (Graham Laidler) of "Punch", and Gilbert Wilkinson (who, as well as being a regular newspaper cartoonist during the 30s and 40s, also did much humorous illustration for "Strand" and other popular magazines). And, though Hilda Cowham (who contributed to many annuals, etc.) is included, her entry makes no mention of the subject she was most famous for - her graphic, leggy schoolgirls.

In the bibliographical lists, there are no mentions whatsoever of "Collectors' Digest", W. O. G. Lofts, or Derek Adley, or other well-known names in our field.

On the credit side, the Dictionary does include C. H. Chapman, R. J. Macdonald, Thomas Henry, C. E. and H. M. Brock, Charles Folkard, and those B.O.P. stalwarts, Paul Hardy, Alfred Pearse and Gordon Browne, as well as many well-known illustrators of children's books and magazines, including my own personal favourite, H. R. Millar (who illustrated E. Nesbit's stories).

In answer to my criticisms, the authors may well say that they have not included some of the names I mention as not being illustrators of books. But they all appeared within hard-

covers, even if these were annuals - and they cite annuals in their lists many times. In my opinion, readers of a reference work such as this, expect to find the names of the creators of such famous and popular characters (in illustration) as Tiger Tim, Pip, Squeak and Wilfred, Happy and Japhet, Bessie Bunter, and of the artist who illustrated the first few books by the immortal Wodehouse. But they won't. Perhaps, if a second edition appears sometime in the future, the omissions may be rectified (there are many more that I haven't the space to mention).

"The Dictionary of British Book Illustrators" is, nevertheless, a delight to browse through and many memories are evoked by the names and pictures that it does contain. It should certainly be on the shelves of anyone at all interested in illustration, and indeed in books in general. But it is not, as the jacket-blurb would have us believe, 'comprehensive'. Not yet, anyway. Let's look forward to that possible second edition...

* *

News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

MIDLAND

There was a disappointing attendance of 9 members at our January meeting. Tom Porter and Christine Brettell could not be present for health reasons.

Tom was very much missed, for he is, and always has been, a tower of strength to the club. Christine, who is also a very valued member, has been absent for some time with back trouble.

Nevertheless, we had a very enjoyable meeting. Peter Masters displayed an old Captain Annual he had had re-bound. A beautiful piece of work, and enquiries were made whether anyone wished to avail themselves of this binder who does it as a hobby.

A reading from a single-story Magnet was given by Ivan Webster. Mr. Prout is being blackmailed, and a pupil like Coker is not likely to make any worried form-master merry. Some words from Coker sum it up: "A fellow is bound to stand up for his rights, and expect justice even from an old donkey of a form-master like Prout".

We had a discussion on: "has reading the Hamilton stories had any effect on the characters of the readers?". Several members confessed that they had been influenced, mainly for good. Someone has said that Hamilton did more for young people than Baden Powell. This is high praise, but I am convinced that characters like

Wharton, Bob Cherry, Linley, and others had shown how boys could be good yet high-spirited without priggishness. As the Bible would say of Hamilton: "He laboured better than he knew".

Our next meeting will be on 27th March. In the meantime we wish all O.B.B.C. members all the best for 1984, but troubles can come in many forms. May you avoid them all.

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

CAMBRIDGE

There was a good attendance when the Cambridge O.B.B.C. met at the home of Jack Overhill on Sunday, 5th February.

Bill Lofts gave a most original address, his theme being the Cockney dialect. Both Tinker and Mrs. Bardell were for many years Cockneys. A regular plot of Charles Hamilton (and the subs) was the arrival of a new boy from the slums of London and the reaction of the school snobs to this. Edgar Wallace created Cockneys, and was himself one, having been brought up in Billingsgate.

One of the A.P. papers for girls was named "Bow Bells". A true Cockney was one born within the sound of Bow bells. Bill referred to mention of Cockneys in "King Lear" and Twelfth Night". He also mentioned Shaw's "Pygmalion".

A discussion followed about dialects, especially the Cambridge ones, and the effect of the University on this. After tea, the second part of Neville's tape on Marlborough College played. Neville's reminiscences were fascinating to all the listeners, recalling, as he did, the names and characteristics of boys and masters.

The meeting closed with a very hearty vote of thanks to Jack and his wife and daughter for their hospitality.

LONDON

The 36th Annual General Meeting saw Chris Harper elected to be chairman for 1984. All other retiring officers were re-elected en bloc.

There was a period of silence in memory of the late Reuben

Godsave, a well loved and esteemed member and host of the annual Leytonstone meetings.

Two quizzes were organised by Roy Parsons for those present to solve during the tea break. Josie Packman and Thelma Bradford dispensed a fine brew of tea. The Nine Questions quiz was won by Laurie Sutton and the Chums oneby Bill Bradford.

Larry Peters' Places and Characters' Quiz was won by Chris Harper.

Ray Parsons read the short story from Punch entitled 'William and the Social Workers' which was written by E. S. Turner.

Another chapter of the Union Jack story "Guns is Guns" was read by Winifred Morss.

A fine dissertation by that eminent Greyfriars scholar, Millicent Lyle, entitled "Wibley Writes a Pantomime" evoked much laughter and was loudly applauded.

The retiring chairman, Roy Parsons, and the rest of the officers were thanked for their fine efforts during 1983.

Next meeting on Sunday, 11th March at the Liberal Centre, Ealing. Tea provided but bring own tuck. BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Owing to decorating in the CITY OF LEEDS ROOM, we had to hold our meeting in a smaller, but quite cosy room. We had twelve members present, and we were pleased to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Roger Kilburn joining us for the first time.

It was decided, that we should investigate the prospect of having an exhibition on behalf of our Club, at some local library. Seemingly, an exhibition had been organised in the 50's and had proved very successful.

Harry Barlow gave his thoughts on the sub writers in the MAGNET. He had heard so much criticism about the writers, that he thought it fair that he should give them some support. He thought some of the sub writers' stories were as good as - and sometimes better - than some of the stories written by Frank Richards. Indeed, using THE MAGNET COMPANION as a guide to authors' names of various stories, Harry read from one episode

supposedly written by Frank Richards, that contained expressions Frank Richards himself would never use. Perhaps Frank Richards, like many other people, had his "off days".

No one can doubt for one moment, that had it not been for the sub writers, THE MAGNET would have ceased publication. Editorial policy of trying to get Charles Hamilton to start new papers, meant that THE MAGNET had to go without the contributions of the favourite author. Similarly, perhaps there was some evidence that some Editors wanted to write stories, so they could receive payment for them!

A lively, friendly discussion led by Harry - and it was with reluctance that we had to close the meeting at 9.15 p.m. Next meeting at our usual venue - CITY OF LEEDS ROOM, Leeds Parish Church, Leeds, 2. JOHNNY BULL MINOR

* *

The Postman Called

(interesting items from the Editor's letter-bag

IAN BENNETT (Leicester): What a delight to fine Captain Justice featured on the cover of the first C.D. of 1984. This must be the first front-page appearance of the Modern Boy's famous Gentleman Adventurer since the M.B. ceased publication back in October 1939, soon after the outbreak of war. Of course, Justice & Co. never enjoyed anything like the world-wide acclaim of certain other characters in the realm of boys' fiction much celebrated in the pages of C.D., but those of us with a scientific bent thought very highly of them and revelled in their adventures with amazing inventions, from giant robots to space rockets. Great reading.

You probably know that Patrick Moore referred to Captain Justice & Co. in his book "Science and Fiction" some years ago, and the famous science fiction author Brian Aldis dedicated one of his volumes to "The Spirit of Captain Justice". Like so many of our favourite characters, they live on in the hearts of those who enjoyed them. Thank you for reviving happy memories.

HAROLD LACK (Northampton): I thought that I must write to you in

connection with your remarks about the book by Peter Lovesey. By a strange coincidence I had not heard of him until last October when I borrowed a book from the Public Library entitled "Keystone" by this Peter Lovesey. As a devotee of the early silent cinema I was, of course, attracted by the title and the book turned out to be an interesting little thriller about the Hollywood of 1915. The story was fiction but all the well-known names of the Keystone Film Co. appear as characters in the book - Mabel Normand, the director Mack Sennett, "Fatty" Arbuckle, etc. I think that you would fine it very interesting - it is his latest book, apparently, so I suppose that it won 't be in paperback for a while.

BILL LOFTS (London): I feel rather flattered that friend Tommy Keen calls me 'historian of The Magnet' - but I was almost as shocked as he was at the poor office-boy type of illustrations of the 1920 Holiday Annual, and reduced to silence. Since that occasion I have been doing some delving and think the artist was either R. H. Evens (who illustrated a long series of school tales by one of the worst substitute Magnet writers) or V. Daniel who I believe illustrated the very last of the Rookwood stories. But I hope to get authentic data when I can peruse some official records later on.

Whilst an artist must take the blame for bad errors that do not match the script, I would venture to suggest that the editor is almost as much to blame for passing them. They were terribly slip-shod to say the least in the Companion papers - a theme that I may enlarge on for a future article.
P.S. The name is 'Evens' and not Evans.

LESLIE ROWLEY (Chingford): I am grateful to Fr. F. Hertszberg for his guidance regarding Franciscans and Friars. I, myself, promise not to err again. I cannot, however, speak for those others who have made similar references in the past, and we might all of us yet be excused if the assumption that, at some stage, the friars left and their place was taken by a monastic order is proved correct. The "unrecorded period" mentioned by Fr. Hertszberg may well be covered in the "History of Greyfriars School" by H. S. Quelch. That gentleman would not be guilty of any inaccuracy, for his would be

the pen of the serious historian. Mine, alas, scratches on in search of artless amusement!

I find myself agreeing with Harold Truscott. Mr. Keen has certainly a tender heart and I share his views of tyranny and bullying in this real world of ours. But the world of Greyfriars is not the real world and I thank my lucky stars that I can escape to that other world so often that I seem to spend more time there than I do in the rather nasty universe of life.

ERNEST HOLMAN (Leigh-on-Sea): Your front cover this month sent my mind back a few years. When a child I remember a book in my parent's possessions called 'Valentine Vox, Ventriloquist'. It was a very old book then, and I've no idea who wrote the story. I never read it, anyway - and I don't think my parents did, either! Whether Val Fox was a descendant or not, storywise, I wouldn't like to say.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: I recall that, when I was a child, my father often reminisced affectionately about the story "Valentine Vox". I never saw the book, but I believe it was a Victorian novel with a background of the sea, and Val, the ventriloquist, was a midshipman. It certainly had made a lasting impression on my Dad. I never had any doubt that Val Fox of "Puck" was an echo of that famous, at that time, old story. Anyone know anything more about it?)

TOMMY KEEN (Thames Ditton): I really had to smile after reading through the February C.D. On page 18, I wrote stating that perhaps Harold Truscott's views on Greyfriars were rather similar to mine, but on page 31, it appears that perhaps they are not.

Tom and Jerry, Donald Duck, Pluto and the rest of the screen cartoon characters could be flattened out by steam rollers, tossed over cliffs, and knocked into all kinds of shapes, but this was pure farce, not to be compared with feature films.

One could, I suppose, by reducing the Magnet to the level of a comic paper such as Rainbow or Comic Cuts (and the word 'reducing' must not be misconstrued, as the old time comics were marvellous) accept the continuous disasters which befell Bunter, but our Greyfriars stories were, on the whole, fairly serious stuff.

Tender hearted I may be (rather nice thought), but my conscience was not affected by the bullying, etc.

The telepathy, Mr. Truscott, turned out to be one sided. But it's all good fun.

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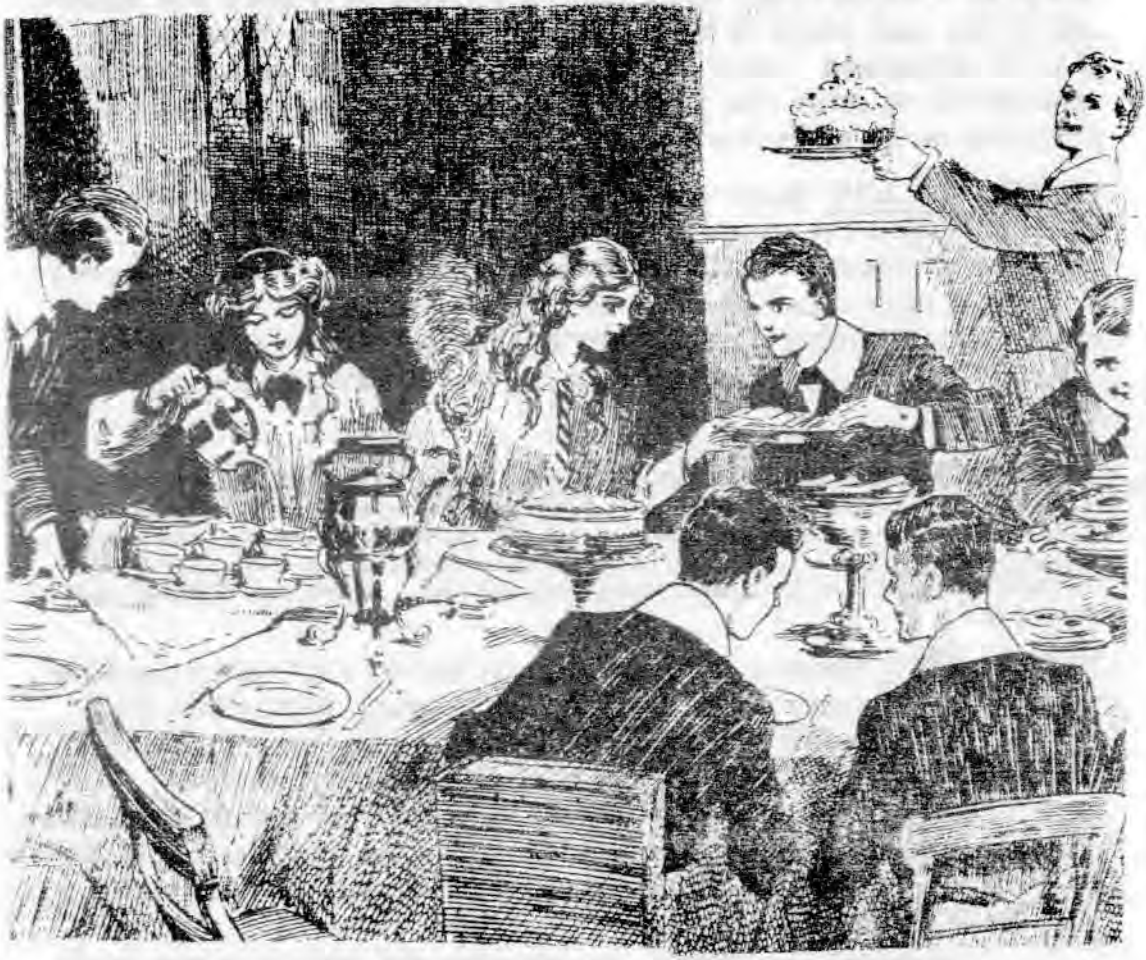

Artist, the young Leonard Shields

(The above is part of a large, charming picture which appeared on the cover of the Empire Library Christmas Number of 1910 to illustrate the Hamilton serial "Cousin Ethel's Schooldays", then having its initial run in that paper. The story was reprinted later in the Gem as a serial, and as a complete novel in the Boys' Friend 3d Library.)

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): I share your feelings about "additional dialogue" and "up-dating". I picked up a copy of Miss Kay King's "Revised Version" of Greyfriars, in a bookshop the other day. I know it's unfair to judge a book on a brief, cursory inspection, but I really couldn't take to Bunter ejaculating, "Oh, golly gumdrops!" or poor Hurree Singh being made to exclaim, "It is not a pretty sight". Miss King seems to have deleted some of Hamilton's much-criticised "padding", too, but with it has gone much of his dry humour of course. The only occasion, I feel, when "up-dating" might be pardonable, is when the original language is so archaic that the meaning is unclear - and even then the purpose of the "revised" text should be to help in the understanding of the original, not to replace it.

It's surprising - or is it? - the different kinds of people who read the Old Papers. There was the erudite Robert Robinson on Radio 4 yesterday referring to the "Gem" coming through his letterbox in the course of a discussion about the "addictive" nature of periodicles.

* *

WANTED: Union Jacks 78, 80, 102, 103, 106, 108, 109, 113, 114, 188, 193, 195, 196, 197, 301, 312, 313, 319, 320, 402, 463, 464, 498, 733.
H. OWEN, 28 Narcissus Road, London, N.W.6.

* *

WANTED: BUY or EXCHANGE: Bullseye Nos. 41, 89; Surprise No. 3; and others; Film Fun 57 (Double Xmas?).
SUTTON, 41 Swalecliffe Ave., Manchester, M23 9DN.

* *

FRECKLES?

D. JAMES MARTIN (Southampton): The Annual gets better and better every year. I particularly liked the Scarlet Pimpernel article as I have my parents' copies of 5 or 6 of the novels. Does anyone remember the stories of Gene Stratton Porter, e.g. "Freckles" and "The Girls of the Limberlost"? My mother read them to me before I could read, and helped me to my love of books.

* *

NEW REFERENCE WORKS FROM MESSRS ADLEY & LOFTS

1. THE THRILLER (Amalgamated Press 1929-1940)
   A listing of all stories and authors, with a four-page introduction by Derek Adley.
   28 pages, including covers (page size A5).
   Price: £1.35 plus 13p post.

2. THE HOTSPUR - A Catalogue 1933 to 1959
   A listing of all stories, strips, free gifts, contents of annuals, etc., with introduction.
   88 pages, including covers, and 17 pages of illustrations.
   (Page size A5)
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