

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS DIGEST

VOL. 38

No. 453

SEPTEMBER 1984



From a little window, unseen himself by any possible observer, Rogue Racketraw swept the moor with his powerful field-glass. His teeth came together with a sharp click—as in the distance, half-hidden by high grass and thickets, he spotted horseman after horseman. Six or seven mounted constables were surrounding the mill.

(A Macdonald scene from the *Miller of the Moor* series in the *Gem* of 1922. 1922 was the *Gem*'s best year since blue cover days.)

47p

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Norman Shaw

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COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

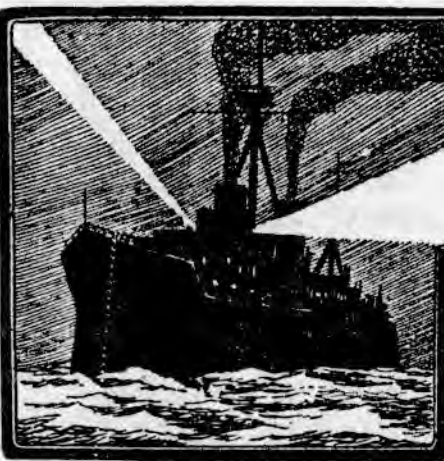
Vol. 38

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A Word from the Skipper.

There is nothing new except
what has been forgotten.

EDITORIAL

JOSIE

As we went to press last month we learned the sad news that Josie Packman had been taken from us. The death of Josie is a great loss to the hobby, and, especially, to our London Club which has had more than its share of sadness in the past few years.

Josie and Len were in the hobby from the beginning. Both were great Sexton Blake enthusiasts; both were great hobbyists; both were intensely loyal to the London Club, the mother of all the Old Boys' Book Clubs.

A few months after Collectors' Digest came into being, the Packmans, together with the late Bob Blythe, founded the London O.B.B.C. Before that, Len and Josie had been the prime movers in what they called the Sexton Blake Circle, a little coterie of friends who idolised the great fictional detective.

Len died a good many years ago, but Josie continued with her interests in the hobby. She conducted the Blake Library for our London club, and she conducted the "Blakiana" column in this magazine. How long Josie was responsible for "Blakiana" I am not quite sure, but I think it must be for about 30 years, following in the wake of H. M. Bond who had run the column in the very early days.

Josie was a kind and gentle lady; one who made friends easily. She had a sense of kindly humour which endeared her to all who knew her. However, that she had strength of character was evidenced by her chairmanship of the London Club, a position which she held with distinction in 1974 and 1982. On a great many occasions she entertained the club in East Dulwich, at her home or in halls engaged for the occasion. The meetings at Dulwich were bright spots in the club's years.

For some years past Josie suffered from Diabetes. Some eight months or so ago, however, it became evident to those who knew her best, that Josie was fading, and more seriously ill than could be accounted for by the controlled Diabetes. For many months, Madam and I were seriously worried about her. Now we rang her up more often for a little telephone chat, which she seemed to enjoy, and which she assured us made her feel a little better.

But Josie was steadily getting worse, and she died on 16th July. She has gone to join her dearly-loved Len in a higher life, but those of us who are left will never forget her.

Ben Whiter has observed: "I can visualise the Union Jack flying at half mast at the Baker Street residence of Sexton Blake and Tinker."

And I bet that our Josie is smiling away, and nudging Len, at that lovely little epitaph.

SO AWFUL!

Last month our reviewer mentioned an old Magnet sub-story which was such a mix-up and so generally awful that it provided entertaining reading. Among sub-stories there are those, like that one, which entertain in a way the writer didn't intend, and there are also those which are unreadable. And it wasn't only the sub-writers who provided that sort of thing.

Way back in 1927 Agatha Christie wrote "The Big Four." It featured Poirot completely out of character, and it comprised a series of episodes so utterly preposterous that one is amazed at how it came to be written. Yet, oddly enough, it makes entertaining reading, with the reader chuckling all the way through in a way the writer never intended.

It was many years after that that I read my first Christie, "Ten Little Niggers" - and got hooked. It wasn't so easy to get the older stories in those days, but eventually I obtained them all, many with the help of Len Packman.

I once told Agatha that I didn't like "The Big Four." She agreed that it was awful, and, unusual for a writer, made excuses for it. "I had been very ill at the time," she said in excuse. An excuse which, in fact, was true. It was at the time of her broken marriage with Christie followed by her disappearance. Many newspapers thought the latter a publicity stunt, but I think she probably actually had a mental breakdown.

If you told Hamilton you didn't like one of his stories, his attitude would always be that it was just your poor taste. He would never make excuses for a story.

So Christie wrote one tale which was absolute tripe, so much so that it was never boring but was entertaining. And, in her old age, she wrote one that I find unreadable to this day "Passenger to Frankfurt" which I have started several times but never finished.

And Hamilton wrote one tale which I found, and still find, unreadable, in his sunset years. Often I have read half way through "Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals". I have never finished it to this day.

BECAUSE THEY WERE ENTERTAINMENT.....

It warms the heart to see that most of the pungent critics of the theatre are falling over one another to find flowing words of praise for the new show at Drury Lane - "42nd Street." It seems that people will go along in droves to see the old shows from the twenties and thirties while so much of the new stuff leaves them stone cold.

Those old shows had family appeal. They brought out the best in us, and they are repeating their success. Shows which were unsophisticated and pleasant to watch and to listen to, with songs which were really songs and tunes which had - well - tunes and melodies which were not just a cacophony of din.

No wonder "42nd Street" is drawing the masses. They have included in it the best songs from the great Warner Musicals of long ago. We screened them all in the Small Cinema - "42nd Street", "Footlight Parade", "Lullaby of Broadway", "Yankee Doodle Dandy", and the rest. And new generations are just catching up with them, it seems.

While on the subject of great entertainment of yester year, I would draw your attention to fine old crime stories - some half-forgotten today - which are being republished in sparkling presentation by the Hogarth Press. Already published are old novels by Gladys Mitchell, Rex Stout, Romilly & Katherine John, and Anthony Berkeley. One by Freeman Wills Crofts ("Inspector French's Greatest Case") is promised for next year. All are in paperback at £2. 95 each.

An additional attraction with these books is that each contains a preface, discussing the story and the writer, by Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig.

THE ANNUAL.

This year's C. D. Annual has hung in the balance for a while. Two things made me ponder. One was the ever increasing cost these days of anything in the publishing line, and lots of our readers are pensioners. The other is that life has not been too easy in the Skipper's cabin since my beloved Madam was taken.

But we're going ahead with it. So many readers want it, I

know. The order form for the Annual comes with this issue of C. D. It helps if you order early, for we cannot print many extra copies to allow for latecomers. On the order form, as usual, there is space for your personal advertisement or for you to send greetings to your friends. The Annual is unique with its small ads which everybody reads. If you use the service, you help to keep the wheels turning.

THE EDITOR

MEMORIES OF JOSIE

recalled by Larry Morley

I was saddened to hear of the death of Josie Packman. I knew her for over twenty years. She was a kind and gentle lady of the type fast vanishing in this modern age. In all the time I knew her I never heard her say a bad word against anyone. At the risk of sounding old-fashioned, she was a gentlewoman.

We shared many interests - Sexton Blake, cats, and old films. We would spend long sessions on the telephone discussing these subjects.

It seems so cruel and ironic that we should lose two fine ladies within a few weeks - Madam and Josie. It is said that the good die first.

Rest peacefully, Josie. You will be remembered by all Club members and by everybody who knew you.

DEATH OF FRANCIS LOWE

With much sadness we record the death of Francis Ronald Lowe of Derby, who was taken to a higher life suddenly but peacefully on June 14th.

Mr. Lowe had been a loyal and enthusiastic reader of this magazine for many years, and was a great Frank Richards fan. He had been ailing for the past couple of years, and found comfort and consolation in C.D. and in the Hamilton stories. For some years he was a very avid church bell ringer, and had rung over 250 peals around Derbyshire.

We express our deepest sympathy to Mr. Lowe's widow, Hilda, at this very sad time.

Danny's Diary

SEPTEMBER 1934

It has been another truly great month in the Monthly Libraries. In the Boys' Friend Library there are two stories by Edwy Searles Brooks. They are "Waldo's Wonder Team", a story of League Football starring Waldo, the Wonder Man, and "The St. Frank's Castaways" which is an exciting holiday adventure for Nipper & Co.

A Captain Justice story, from the Modern boy series, is "The Ocean Outlaw", and "Who Sails With Me?" by Mauric Everard, a tale of the Spanish Main, a serial in the Modern Boy last year.

In the Sexton Blake Library there is a Granite Grant story entitled "The Red Domino", which starts off in carnival time in Nice in the South of France.

Two glorious holiday tales in the Schoolboys' Own Library. "The Trail of the Trike" is a hiking tale in which Bob Cherry buys a trike to help the hikers on their way, and a little gang of thieves seem very interested in that particular trike.

Quite magnificent is the other S.O.L., "Seven Boys in a Boat", which tells of the St. Jim's chums on a river trip in their boat, the Old Bus, which is to take them from Kingston up the Thames to Oxford.

Queen Mary has launched the new Cunard-White Star liner, - previously known as No. 534 - and she has named it the "Queen Mary." It will be the world's greatest liner.

King of the Islands is back in Modern Boy. A new run started with the last issue of September. The opening story of the new series is "South Seas Salvage". On the shore of an island inhabited only by cannibals there lies a wreck with £7,000 waiting to be salvaged by someone. Ken King, with his ship "Dawn", lands into the middle of this exciting project.

They are now giving away metal models of motor-cars with Modern Boy. There is a new series of motor-racing and boxing

tales about one, Hurricane Bill Langley, by John Hunter. Hurricane challenged Carnera, the champion, but got no reply. Tom Mix continues his life story. Captain Justice is in a series about "The Terror of Titanic Tower", in which the Gentleman Adventurer and his comrades face an invasion from the sea, in the most amazing structure the world has ever known, rearing 10,000 feet up out of the mid-Atlantic.

There has been a bad railway crash just outside Glasgow station. Two passenger trains met head on, due to one of the drivers misreading the signals. 6 passengers and the driver and the fireman of one train were killed, and 20 people were injured.

There has been a terrible typhoon in Japan, with the loss of many hundreds of lives.

A jolly good month at the Pictures. Alice Brady and Franchot Tone were in "Stage Mother", an entertaining film of stage life. Alice Brady is a fine character actress, and one of my favourites.

A good "family" story was "This Side of Heaven" with Lionel Barrymore and a big cast. The father of the family is accused of embezzlement, and the whole family rallies round poor old Dad.

A big one was "Queen Christina" starring Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, Lewis Stone, and plenty more. Garbo is a Swedish queen of 200 years ago. She didn't like the idea of a political marriage, so spent most of the film roaming round Sweden dressed as a man. Mum thought it fine, and Doug breathed heavily and said "Garbo is divine." I thought it a bit of tripe, really.

Kay Francis looked fine in "Mandalay", a torrid melodrama about a murderous lady, with Ricardo Cortez as a fearful cad.

Marion Davies and Gary Cooper were in "Spy 13", a story of the American Civil War.

Eddie Cantor was tip-top in a Musical called "Roman Scandals" in which a young man dreams himself back in the days of Ancient Rome. Some lovely tuneful songs in this one. Norma Shearer, Robert Montgomery, and Herbert Marshall were in "Riptide" about an American chorus girl who married a British diplomat.

"Hollywood Party", a kind of revue, was a bit feeble, but some of the acts were good, especially an appearance by Laurel

and Hardy. Finally, Irene Dunne (she is always good) in "This Man is Mine".

A rather unusual month of stories in the Gem. Quite a variety. The opening story is "A Shadow Over St. Jim's". This is a Lumley-Lumley tale, and at the end of the tale Lumley-Lumley dies. It finishes with the sombre words: "Within the sick chamber, with closed blinds, lay what had been Jerrold Lumley-Lumley - the Outsider of St. Jim's - now

"A thing

O'er which the raven flaps his funereal wings. "

However, all is not lost. In "The Boy Who Came Back", there is a new boy at St. Jim's named Ernest Levison. He has known Lumley in the past as a boy who went into death-like trances. Levison goes down into the vaults and emerges with Lumley-Lumley - alive.

Surely the most remarkable couple of tales ever to appear in the Companion Papers. It seems a bit odd that a doctor should have thought that someone was dead when he was only in a trance. Still, it was all most fascinating, if a bit weird.

Next came "Under False Colours". Jim Brown was going to sea. Lord Devigne was going to school. And the two met in a railway compartment, and exchanged identities. So, when the tramp steamer, Mary Jane, put to sea, Jim Brown was not on board - he was sailing under false colours at St. Jim's. Reminds you of the story when Tom Redwing and Clavering changed places in a railway train in the old Magnet series.

Next, a real thriller entitled "The House of Fear" in which Cousin Ethel meets up with a poisonous snake in the Black House on the moor. This one and the Lumley-Lumley tale were not illustrated by Macdonald. I don't like this new artist. Finally, a lovely holiday tale "The Mystery of the Sea", with Tom Merry & Co on holiday in Devon. A nice old-fashioned tale with a wrecked sailing ship and a message in a bottle.

There is a new series of St. Frank's thrillers in the Gem under the collective title "The Ten Talons of Taaz." Ten St. Frank's boys face death at the hands of shipwrecked passengers who

refuse to be rescued. This series started in the month's final issue.

There has been an explosion and fire at Gresford Colliery at Wrexham. There were 400 men in the pit at the time, and 265 were killed. A terrible disaster.

There have been a lot of new Agatha Christie books out this year. Yet another one is out this month, and Doug bought it for 7/6. It is a collection of short stories, all very good, with the overall title "The Listerdale Mystery", but an especially good one is "Philomel Cottage" in which a woman, living in a very lonely spot, finds out gradually that she is married to a man who marries girls for their money, and does away with them.

There is a newish breakfast food out called Kellogg's Corn-flakes. The whole family likes it, but I like mine with hot milk and Mum likes hers with cold milk. It is 6½d a packet, and a packet lasts us several days.

In the Magnet the cover-to-cover stories have continued, and the series with Bunter as a Billionaire has gone on all through the month. First tale of the month is "Billionairing With Bunter". The chums are Bunter's guests in France, with Jarvish acting as Bunter's valet and Tiger Bronx, the gangster, on the track of the fat Billionaire. The next story "The Shadowed Billionaire" is set in Venice, and, with gangsters after him, Bunter finds it isn't all honey being a rich chap. Arthur Augustus of St. Jim's comes into this one.

Then came "Bagged By Bandits", with Bunter kidnapped and held to ransom in the wilds of Italy. Next, "Ructions in Rome", with Ponsonby and his cronies of Highcliffe in the picture.

The last story of the month is "Peril in the Air", with the hectic holiday with the Billionaire getting more and more hectic. This one brings the series to a close, with the billions going to their rightful owner and the chums going home to school. Lot of fun and adventure in this series, but it was a bit too far-fetched and a wee bit too repetitive.

Mr. Chapman, the artist, has been doing all the Magnet pictures during the past three weeks. I expect Mr. Shields is on

holiday.

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

"The Red Domino" had appeared as "The Crimson Domino" in the S.B.L. in the summer of 1922.

"The Trail of the Trike" comprised 3 stories from the 4-story Methuselah series of the summer of 1929. That year the holiday fell into two parts, the Trike series being followed by the Ravenspur Grange series, in the Magnet.

"Seven Boys in a Boat" comprised the first four stories of the Old Bus series of the 1923 Gem, without much doubt the most charming holiday series Hamilton ever wrote.

The new Ken King series which started in Modern Boy in September 1934 was the Tenth set of stories on the character.

The film "Spy 13" was released as "Operator 13" in the States. In "Mandalay" the tiny child was one, Shirley Temple, and it may have been her first film.

"A Shadow Over St. Jim's" had been "A Shadow in the School" in the autumn of 1910. "The Boy Who Came Back", the sequel, had been "The New Boy's Secret" the following week in the 1910 Gem. "Under False Colours" had appeared under the same title in the summer of 1911. "The House of Fear" had been "The Black House on the Moor" from a few weeks later in 1911. It is famous (or notorious) as being a barefaced plagiarism of the Sherlock Holmes tale "The Speckled Band".

"The Mystery of the Sea" had been "The Secret of the Sea" with the oddity of an alternative title : Or "The Message in the Bottle", of a few weeks earlier in 1911.

1934 was Agatha Christie's most prolific year. She had 4 of her most famous works published, plus one under the Mary Westmacott nom-de-plume. The short story "Philomel Cottage", from the "Listerdale Mystery" collection, was made into a fine British film "Love from a Stranger" a year or two later, starring Basil Rathbone and Ann Harding.

* * * * *

BLAKIANA

(Conducted by Mark Jarvis)

When I took on the temporary conducting of Blakiana just a few weeks ago, to assist Josie during her illness, I had no idea that she would, so soon be taken away from amongst us. Yet another of our hobby's pioneers has been called away. Josie's quiet yet infectious enthusiasm for the hobby in general, but Blake in particular, will be long remembered.

I feel a great sense of loss, as I know we all do. Goodbye Josie; and thank you for guiding me in my Blake readings.

FORTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKE

Part Two

by W. O. G. Lofts

About a week after our capture, and getting a bit puzzled as to why we had not moved on behind the main Japanese lines, we awoke one morning to find the camp deserted. the guards seemingly having disappeared during the night. Afterwards we learned that

General Slim one of the SEAC Commanders had launched a panzer attack from Bengal that had almost cut off the Japs in our Chittagong area. Lucky we were, indeed, but not in health. Riddled with malaria and other tropical diseases, I was quickly transported back to India to a safe zone, where after long hospitalization I was invalided home by a Red Cross hospital ship. Curiously, I never saw another copy of a Sexton Blake paperback, despite the many thousands of books available by the Red Cross, and other service organisations.

Back home in civilian life, I found that apart from the odd refereeing of football matches my sporting days were now

a thing of the past, so reading became my main recreation. I had not forgotten the excellent Sexton Blake Library I had read, and I

LONG COMPLETE TALE OF DETECTIVE WORK IN THE MIDLANDS!



quickly discovered that back numbers were easily obtainable at second-hand bookstalls, and especially one at our local market place at Gerald Swans bookstall in Church Street market. At that time I must confess that by the numbering of The Sexton Blake Library I had concluded that it had started about the middle of 1941. It was with some sort of shock when one day I picked up No. 744 of another series, and to realise that the great detectives adventures had been running from at least the twenties! Consequently I had an enormous number to still collect to get my full set of them. The friendly manager at the bookstall used to save me any copies of the S.B.L. that I had not got that came in by way of exchange - and he also used to point out a list pinned at the side of the stall of wanted numbers (many crossed off) wanted by an elderly gentleman who was also a collector. One day I happened to meet him there, when he gave me the startling information that there had actually been three series of the Library, it starting originally in 1915 when he had bought the numbers as a schoolboy. He had collected them all, but foolishly had loaned some of the later ones out, and they had never been returned, hence trying to get hold of them again to complete his set to date.

I saw them all later in his basement flat in Kensington Gardens Square, just behind Whitely's store in Bayswater, and it certainly was an impressive sight. This gentleman unfortunately seemed more interested in the actual collecting side than reading the stories, for I was bursting to know who had created the character, when he actually started in another paper? Was there any biography about Sexton Blake and background? What was Tinker's real name? as it was logical to me then, that no-one could have just this single name on an identity card, as well as for other Government purposes and records. However, despite his lack of inside knowledge, he did kindly call at my house from time to time with odd duplicates he had picked up from various market-places, but then suddenly his visits stopped, and I wondered what had happened to him. In his area one day, and calling at his flat, I found that it was empty, enquiries elucidating that he had died, and all his effects of old furniture and books had been disposed of

by the local Council - including his collection of The Sexton Blake Library - and regarded as old junk!

Such however was my thirst for any information pertaining to Sexton Blake that I used to write with queries to the editor of the S.B.L. with numerous queries on a regular basis. Unfortunately the editor Len Pratt did not share my enthusiasm. Often I would get a reply such as

Dear Mr. Lofts,
Thanks for your letter, I too reciprocate
your good wishes for the New Year.
Yours Sincerely,
THE EDITOR.

or
Dear Mr. Lofts,
Gilbert Chester is still alive, but has
not written for us for some time.
Yours Sincerely,
THE EDITOR.

Now one of my favourite authors at that time, was John Hunter, who had introduced into his Blake yarns a character named Captain Dack of The Mary Ann Trinder, and to give him credit Len Pratt did have the courtesy to forward a letter on to Mr. John Hunter, Not long afterwards I received a delightful letter from him, a stark contrast to the short pieces from the editor. As well as giving him details of why 'Tinker' was now called Edward Carter, he also extended an invitation to meet him when in the Worthing area - an invitation I soon was able to accept.

* * * * *

Nelson Lee Column

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by an Old Boy

Looking through an old volume of the "History of St. Frank's" the other day, I came across an interesting account of a fight that

occurred between the boys of St. Frank's and the lads of Bannington. And--But let me put it as Dr. Thimbleby, the author of the history, recounts it.

"Thursday, 24th of August, 1643, I fear me that boys nowa-days are getting rougher than ever. Yesterday evening several boys from this school did leave without permission and enter the hamlet of Bannington, hard by. News had reached the school that some wondrously clever mummers had arrived in Bannington, which, I doubt me not, was the reason for their going. There has always been enmity between the boys of the school and the apprentices of Bannington. One, Tom Townsend, a hulking youth, and leader of the Bannington boys, did molest the St. Frank's boys as they entered the place. The Bannington boys were armed with stout clubs, while the St. Frank's lads had naught but their hands.

"Owing to superior numbers and clubs, the village boys beat back the school lads; but these, rallied by their leader, James Merryweather, fought hard with their fists, dodging the blows from the cudgels. Some of the St. Frank's boys were grievously hurt, I fear, but eventually they overcame the Bannington lads, and things were going well with them when up dashed a horseman, pursued closely by several more.

"The first horseman was an escaping Royalist being sorely pressed by the Roundheads, The Bannington people were in sympathy with the Royalist cause, owing to the Lord of Bannington being so good to them. Therefore, St. Frank's boys and Bannington boys closed in and protected the fleeing Royalist from the Roundheads. Clubs clashed with swords, but the Roundheads were in the minority, and were forced to retire in confusion. The Royalist was thus enabled to make good his escape to the King, who sent a special messenger back to St. Frank's requesting the venerable headmaster to give the whole school a holiday.

The news arrived early this morning, and as I write this in my study, I can hear the shouts and cheers of the boys as they stream out to the fields and the mummers of Bannington.

There is another story of a terrific fight which occurred at St. Frank's in the "good old days". Perhaps I had better tell it in my own words. In the early part of 1735 a wave of smuggling swept

over the coast near St. Frank's. The coast thereabouts was a barren, sandy waste, with here and there high cliffs honeycombed with caves. A band of smugglers started operations not far from where Caistowe now stands. These men prospered until their smuggling took on gigantic proportions, and the coastguards were powerless against them. The smugglers were all desperate ruffians and armed to the teeth. However, a brigade of soldiers was sent down to scour the countryside. And one night, when the smugglers were at their activities, they were chased by the soldiers. The only safe refuge was St. Frank's, which, once they entered it, would afford them a garrison to repel the soldiers. But the gates of the school were locked, and the Head refused them admission. Thus balked, the smugglers forced the gates down, and a lively set-to started between the boys of St. Frank's and the armed smugglers. Several of the lads were hurt by the muskets, but they held the smugglers up long enough for the soldiers to arrive and capture them. Whether the boys were rewarded for their bravery is not recorded, but they jolly well deserved to be!

Historical note: Bannington was a one-time Royalist stronghold, and the seat of a Bishop. Helmford in the area, had an old castle which once dominated the town and has long since disappeared to make way for a new reservoir, but its stones, redolent of the history of Saxon England and the Norman conquerors are still to be seen in the walls of St. Frank's.

BROOKS' FAVOURITE CHARACTERS?

by Esmond Kadish

Who was Edwy Searles Brooks' favourite amongst his own characters? Jim Cook tells us, in the "St. Frank's Companion", that Mr. Brooks had named Handforth as being his particular favourite, but I was most interested to read, in a 1929 "Nelson Lee", his reply to a reader who had asked the identical question - assuming, of course, that this really is the Great Man himself replying!

After saying that he has, in fact, "no actual favourite", Mr. Brooks refers to "fellows that I thoroughly enjoy writing about, which makes them, I suppose, favourites", and mentions "that cheeky young rascal, Willy Handforth" who "seems to spring to my mind first, closely followed by Vivian Travers and William Napoleon Browne and Archie Glenthorne". Why, then, does he feature

Nipper and Handy in practically every story? Mr. Brooks replies that the former is junior captain, and "Handforth simply won't be left out". He also says that he has "been accused of making a feature of a new chap, and then dropping him completely", to which accusation he quotes the example of the recently-introduced character, Stanley Waldo, who is "for a time quite a novelty", but who "automatically drifts into obscurity when the novelty is worn off".

Perhaps the truth is - as I once wrote - that Brooks was more interested in the development of his plots than in his St. Frank's characters. All the same, Browne and Travers (a **comparitive late-comer**) are two characters whom, I personally, would have liked to see Mr. Brooks develop in his stories. Ezra Quirke - the subject of an article by Jack Hughes in this month's "Digest" - is also an interesting acquisition to St. Frank's, but he seems to me to be more of a "sci-fi" personality than a "normal" character. It is "good-and-bad" mixtures like Vivian Travers, who, ultimately, I feel, prove the most absorbing, and have the most staying-power, so I was interested to read Charles Churchill's comments on the "new and original" Boys' Friend Library tale, "The Schemer of St. Frank's", for June, 1934, which cast Travers in the role of hero.

Actually, I rather liked the story, even though the red-and-blue cover describes it as a "grand new story of school and cricket", and I'm not normally too keen on stories with a sports theme. Briefly, Travers - who has temporarily become captain of the St. Frank's Junior XI is forbidden to ride his motor-cycle by his father, after a particularly bad spill, on pain of being taken away from St. Frank's. However, Bernard Forrest spots him giving Irene Manners a pillion-ride back to the Moor View School, to save her from a "row." Forrest blackmails Travers for a place in the team, and eventually supplants him as captain, but a "Rival Eleven" is formed by Nipper, which restores the situation.

It's a pleasant tale - just right for hot summer days - and interesting, I think, because it shows that Mr. Brooks might have featured Vivian Travers more prominently, and developed him as a character, if the St. Frank's saga had not been phased out.

ORIGINAL or NOT

by E. Grant-McPherson

Regarding the comments in recent C.D.s about Boys Friend Libraries 435 and 439 the following notes may prove of interest.

Firstly with reference to "The Idol of St. Franks" as my good friend Charles Churchill has said, it certainly was a shocker and I heartily confirm his contention that our Edwy could never have penned such an effusion.

Where the "Schemer of St. Franks" is concerned, I would say most definitely that this was written by E.S.B. himself.

Vivian Travers is appointed temporary Captain of the Remove Cricket Team, due to Nipperwaiting for a call from Nelson Lee who is away on a mission.

While on his way to a cricket match, Travers has a horrifying accident on his motor cycle which catches fire and is completely destroyed, fortunately he is not too seriously injured, but, his father puts a ban on any more motorcycling and tells Vivian that if he ever rides a motor cycle again he will take him away from St. Franks for good.

Visiting Helmford one evening (having gone by Bus) Travers meets Irene Manners of the Moor View School who is in distress as she has lost her bus and will be late for call over, Vivian borrows a machine and gets her back to school in time, unfortunately Bernard Forrest sees him and under threat of telling his father forces Travers to include him in the Remove team.

After much excitement however it all turns out happily in the end.

A very good yarn, well written and will please all cricket fans with its excellent descriptions of several matches.

Now No. 439 "St. Franks on Broadway" although not listed as a new story, is in fact another original.

Justin B. Farman's Father, who is an oil magnate is kidnapped by a rival oil company, and in order to get him to sign a contract they threaten to harm his son.

The newspapers report Mr. Farman's disappearance, and of course Justin is very worried so that when two men purporting to be agents of his father bring him a letter, he takes it to the Head-

master who is now a Mr. James Kingswood who, as it is almost the end of term gives him leave to go at once.

After Nelson Lee has made some enquiries it is realised that Farman too has probably been abducted as well, and Mr. Lee and Nipper follow him to New York, what he does not realise is that Handforth and Co. with one or two other Removites who were going on a tour of Europe with Mr. Clifford have changed their minds and are actually sailing on the same liner.

As can well be imagined Handy gets up to his usual antics, and causes everyone a lot of trouble, but again it all comes right in the end, Handforth and Nipper playing a large part in the release of the Farmans.

Edwy once again in very good form.

* * * * *

DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 196 - Magnets 1404 - 12 - Caffyn Series

The Caffyn series has always had a special significance for me because of the correspondence I kept up with Charles Hamilton during the war. In 1943 he wrote to me saying that he used to have a mountain of the old papers, but most of them had been handed over for salvage. "However, I retained a number of Gems and Magnets, for the sake of auld lang syne, as it were. I have sent a good number of them to different readers: but still have a number of them: and if there is any special number you want, and I happen to have it, I will send it to you with pleasure." In a few weeks' time he wrote to say that most of the numbers I wanted had gone. "But five numbers have turned up of one of the series: that dealing with Coker and his cousin in the Remove. I have pleasure in sending you these." Those copies are still in my collection and whenever I look over them I always think of that act of kindness to an unknown schoolboy over forty years ago.

The series began, typically enough, with scenes at Lantham Junction and Courtfield station. There was even a touch of the old magic when Mr. Quelch returning to school was compared with Kipling's soldier who smelt the barracks again: he felt that the term would go well and was quite cordial to the boys in his form -

until he met Edgar Caffyn, Coker's younger cousin. There was also a scene in the railway refreshment rooms with Bunter hiding under a table, listening to Caffyn and his guardian, Mr. Sarle, concoct a scheme to ensure that Aunt Judy's one hundred thousand pounds was diverted from Coker to Caffyn. Mr. Sarle also happened to be Aunt Judy's solicitor and was one of that group of shady lawyers that Charles Hamilton loved to depict.

The Caffyn series marked a watershed in plotting for the Magnet - a change from dynamic to static. Hitherto, each series had developed as it went along, with subtle changes of attitudes and new themes being brought into play. During the previous school series, when Prout was headmaster, Mr. Quelch decided to leave Greyfriars after a while, and then the Secret Seven was formed. The Caffyn series, by contrast, was purely repetitive; each week, Caffyn tried to get Coker disgraced, and each week he failed. It may be that this was editorial policy, in that a new or casual reader could enjoy a single number as a self-contained unit, but the older readers might well have been excused for thinking of it as something of a deterioration.

Yet there were some compensations. Aunt Judy's relationship with her favourite nephew was given greater attention than anywhere else in the Magnet. Originally conceived as a figure of fun (owing much to Dickens' Mrs. Nickleby), in a Victorian poke bonnet, she now became more human, more perceptive, more sympathetic than ever before. Coker's unfeigned pleasure at seeing her, "the hearty ring in his voice" did more to convince the old lady than all of Caffyn's clever plotting. Equally, it was Aunt Judy's request to Coker to take Caffyn in hand that did, in the event, lead to an improvement in his character, which shows that she was more shrewd than she was often given credit for. The externals were still the same as ever - her nineteenth century attire, her forgetfulness of Mr. Prout's name (Stout, or Snout, or Sprout), and her final scene in which she chased her solicitor out of Greyfriars with her umbrella: but her moist eyes when she mistakenly thought Coker had been unkind to her, and her forgiveness of Caffyn for his plotting (which she had half suspected) -

these new facets to her character revealed her as a three-dimensional person, and in a sense she was the star character of the Caffyn series.

* * * * *

MAGNET MEMORIES

by E. Baldock

Saturday was the 'Day' for the publication of the 'Magnet'. We boys knew (just how we discovered the fact I cannot now remember) that copies of the magic paper were secreted in the Newsagents' archives on the Friday evening previous, ready for distribution the following morning. It is all now so long ago and far away that I am sure I will not be breaching any laws of confidence when I relate that we brought pressure (by constant pestering I suspect) upon the dear old fellow at the news shop to 'be a sport' and let us have our copy the night before distribution; this seemed terribly important to us. He, good man that he was, eventually capitulated and submitted to our appeals, adjuring us to 'hide it beneath your jackets', to 'let no-one see it' and to 'breathe a word to no man'. What happy days they were - we never let him down.

Looking back to those far-distant days, now rather more than half a century ago, I can see clearly the considerable influence which the old 'Magnet' had upon our thoughts and actions. I recall that, being rather more than usually teasing, my sister, senior to me by two long years, appealing to me in exasperation, 'Oh, do try to be like Bob Cherry'. Those conversant with Bob's personality and character makes her appeal abundantly clear.

On another occasion, my brother, also senior to me by almost a decade, became cognizant of the fact that I was in some way getting my Magnet a day earlier: he adopted what I can only describe as a Loder-like attitude, appropriating it and loftily informing me that he would let me have it the following morning. My feelings may be imagined, but such situations quicken the mind marvellously, with the result that I, awaiting a suitable moment, seized his 'All Sports', a journal to which he was much addicted. Thus were we in a state of stalemate. I seem to recall that, both being adamant, I had to wait until the next morning before retrieving my dear old Magnet.

Such was the spell cast upon our young minds by those ever-green characters of Greyfriars, who, from my youthful observations appeared to exert an equally strong attraction to girls as well as their brothers - and in no small degree to their fathers also.

When one thinks of these 'battles' of long ago and finds that this same fellow, not so very much changed, reading yet with all the old enthusiasm, with perhaps a rather more mature avidity, the old tales over which we 'fought', over which we pored and became lost to our surroundings in the magic world created by Frank Richards, I am prompted by the desire to say a simple, yet deeply sincere 'Thank you' to his memory - tempora mutantur - but some things remain forever crystallised in time.

Charles Hamilton gave us characters with whom we could associate ourselves, in whom we found great pleasure in imitating, clean-cut athletic fellows, not perfect paragons, of course, for are there not chinks in the finest armour? But good allround chaps whose activities and adventures played, I am sure, a not inconsiderable role in shaping our youthful minds.

It is an interesting phenomenon and doubtless to those gentlemen who make a study of such things, just a little mysterious the degree of popularity that these tales of our youth continue to assert in the lives of we 'old boys'. To us, happily, the cause and reason holds no mystery. It is simply the love of good clean literature, devoid of those tiresome 'ologies' and 'isms' so prevalent in much of the writing of the present day.

They were giants in those days, they are giants yet - sic itur ad astra.

* * * * *

H.B.Vols. for sale - No. 25A Complete China Series in "Special Collectors Edition". Only 100 copies printed. Immac. Condition Open to Offers. - O.O.Print, GBC No. 8 Sahara Series, £12.50. Mint. Magnet Nos. 33, £5. Nos. 39/39 Warren Series/Polpelly, £11 the Two. Nos. 47/48 Compton Series, £8 the Two. Gem No. 7 £3.75. All Ex. Condition, ALL PLUS POSTAGE, Ring (01) 979 4141 to reserve. John Geal, 11 Cotswold Road, HAMPTON, Middx. TW12 3JQ.

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

1931

"We're going to the noozoo", Ethel Chadley had informed countless customers that Wednesday morning.

"What on earth's the noozoo?" countless customers had asked.

"Whipsnade!" Chadley had explained. "They've just opened a new, open-air zoo in a giant park, right out in the country, where you can see the animals roaming around in natural surroundings. My wife and I are taking Ethel to Whipsnade by motor-coach this afternoon".

After the shop had closed at 1 p.m. Chadley slipped the current Gem into the picnic-basket they were taking with them.

"Do you know, Lizzie", he said to his wife, as they walked towards the bus station "they're re-printing the old Tom Merry tales in the 'Gem'! This week's story is 'Tom Merry New Boy', and I first read it in 1907".

"I know - I read it last night", said Lizzie. She added, innocently: "I suppose you won't want the paper any more, for you've got all the old stories packed away in your cupboard".

"We're going to the noozoo", chanted Ethel.

1932

As silent as a skater in one of the ice shows which were becoming popular, the trolleybus slid to a halt outside the shop of Leslie Chadley, newsagent and bookseller. A lady and a boy alighted on the pavement.

As they entered the shop, Lizzie Chadley regarded the woman, and screwed

up her eyes in an effort of memory.

"How do you do, Mrs. Chadley? Remember me?".

"Faith Lessing".

"You're behind the times. I'm Mrs. Fortescue. Book the name, please, and take down my address. I want a daily delivery of papers".

She gave the details, and Lizzie jotted them down in a ledger.

"My husband is an engineer. I've been out in Australia with him". Faith removed the scarf from her head, and shook out her bush of red curls. She had been a brunette in the old days, Lizzie recalled. "You may have read that the wonderful new bridge over Sydney Harbour was opened yesterday. My husband practically designed it & at least, he worked on the bridge".

"How nice!" murmured Lizzie.

"I came home ahead of him to get our house ready, but he will be sailing shortly. Tell your newsboys not to knock when they deliver the papers - I don't rise till ten. You'd better give me a paper for my boy. Leave those pencils alone, Sidney. There, you've upset them all, and now Mrs. Chadley will have to pick them up".

"Never mind", said Lizzie, hastily. "What paper would the child like? 'Tiger Tim's Weekly'? 'The Modern Boy'? The 'Gem'? That's a good one. This week's story is called 'Priscilla, the Peacemaker'".

Lizzie did not add that Chadley had said that the story had been entitled "Miss Priscilla's Mission" in 1908.

"Give me a selection - three different

ones", replied Faith, impatiently.

"Anything, so long as they will keep the little devil quiet".

1933

"Penny, meet Mr. and Mrs. Chadley, two old friends of mine", said Dr. Venner. His wife, a couple of years his junior, shook hands with the Chadleys.

"Is this just a flying visit, sir?" asked the newsagent.

"We're back for good", said Chris. "I've taken over Doctor Thurnell's practice. Had you heard that my mother died a couple of years back in Paignton?"

"No, we didn't know". Lizzie spoke in a low voice. "Your mother was a kind and gentle lady, Mr. Chris".

"Penny, these are the good folk who introduced me to the 'Gem' - oh, so long ago". Chris spread his hands wide to denote the passing of time. "I still read it when I get the chance, which isn't often".

"He's almost made me a Tom Merry fan, too", put in Penelope Venner, with a bright smile.

"Have you a copy of this week's 'Gem'?" asked Chris.

Chadley's face fell. "Bother, sir, we're sold out".

Lizzie turned to her husband. She said: "Don't be daft, Leslie. Let Mr. Chris have your copy. You can order yourself another".

"That's an idea", said Chadley, before Chris had time to protest. He disappeared into the sitting-room, and came back a moment later, bearing the paper with the red, white, and blue cover.

"Here you are, sir" "The Cowboy

of St. Jim's". Tom Merry has just come home from a holiday in the Wild West, and has brought an American boy back with him".

Chris took the periodical, and glanced inside. Above the title of the story, Chadley had written, cryptically, in pencil; 'The ragging of Buck Finn. No. 51'.

"Many thanks, Mr. Chad". Chris placed a square of pasteboard on the counter. "Here's my card, with my local address. I've written on the back a list of the papers that I want you to deliver to me regularly".

"Including the 'Gem'?" queried Chadley.

"What do you think?" interposed Penny.

After a few more minutes of conversation, the Venners made their farewells, and turned to go out to their car, gleaming white under the late January snowfall.

"Wait, sir", called out Chadley. "Here's our telephone number. If you want any special delivery at any time, just give me a ring".

He scribbled the number in the blank space of the Stop Press column of a newspaper which was lying on the counter. Tearing out the column, he handed it to Chris.

Chris nodded, and cast an eye over it as Lizzie opened the door, admitting a flurry of snow. Above the pencilled telephone number was the newspaper's printed Stop Press item:

"Last night Adolf Hitler, ex-architect and leader of the Nazi party, was made Chancellor of the German Reich by President Hindenburg,

following the failure of Herr Von Papen to form a government".

(Next month - 1934)

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The Postman Called

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

BILL WATSON (Chelmsford): I served in the Royal Field Artillery. The Magnet played a big part in my service life. It helped me to relax during my spells off duty. After Dunkirk, I was stationed on the Cliffs of Dover, known at that time as Hell's Corner. I was in a gun emplacement with a Bren Gun, defending one of the Radar towers. Every day Stuka dive-bombers would do their best to put these towers out of action. I shall always remember the title of the last Magnet - "The Shadow of the Sack." I was reading this tale in my dugout when a shell from one of the big German guns on the French coast landed only 30 feet away. If I had not been reading the Magnet at that time, but had been manning my gun instead, I would not be here to-day.

FRANCIS HERTZBERG (Hr. Bebington): C. D. can't be called behind the times. Several years ago the Editor asked whether Middlesex still exists. The London Standard is currently filling its letters-page with the same question. Readers of C. D. will know the answer is YES.

The mention of U.S. Adams of New York (was it chance that 'Ulysses Spencer' gave the appropriate initials?) makes me wonder yet again why American characters were not treated better, for the papers were distributed in America. More detectives lived in Baker Street than Bill Lofts wots of. For example, over a travel agent's shop was the office of Denis McLoughline's "Roy Carson, Special Agent."

Esmond's investigations into Hamiltonia may be impeccable. Those into Holmesiana are not. Neither deerstalker cap nor caped coat are "obligatory", the former only worn where it belongs, in the country, and only twice shown in illustrations, while the meerscham is the product of the superb Willie Gillette rather than Conan Doyle or Sidney Paget. Nice (for me) to see a few of my thoughts in the

August issue. I appear in many places, but none gives me more pleasure than in your small pages.

J.E.M. (Brighton) : I corresponded with Mrs. Packman, somewhat sporadically, over nearly 17 years. Like so many hobbyists encountered through your unique magazine, she was always ready to help both with information and the generous loan of material.

Under her conductorship of *Blakiana*, I contributed around 30 articles to the feature. Always far too kind in her encouragement of my efforts, she never hesitated to make her own point of view clear where it differed from mine. She really did know her *Sexton Blake*!

Sadly, I never met her but I hope, nevertheless, that her family will accept my most sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

The hobby, and especially C.D., has suffered grievous losses in recent weeks. The sadness of these events serve, perhaps, to remind us that we are all, in C. P. Snow's memorable phrase, strangers and brothers.

TED BALDOCK (Cambridge): The cover of the July issue - "She Loved Roses" - was very tasteful, and said so much about *Madam* which would be perhaps very difficult to express in words. It was quite beautiful.

LEN WORMULL (Romford) : I am saddened by the news of Josie. We struck up quite a correspondence in the 70's, and I still have her friendly and helpful letters. The fact that I never had the pleasure of her acquaintance is entirely my own fault. At one time she offered to loan me Teed's *Yellow Tiger*. It would have meant me collecting it from her, as she valued it too highly to send by post. Had I been a keen *Blakian* no doubt I would have gone like a shot, but, alas, *Blake* was never a strong contender in my youthful reading. Mine were only the occasional visits, though I remember taking the *Detective Weekly* for a time. I was besotted with school stories most of the time. She tried more than once to get me along to the London meetings, but I never did go. Maybe it was the loner in me. It is only in recent years that I have ventured out of my shell. *Blakiana* has lost its anchor, and in Josie a great stalwart and friend.

HAROLD TRUSCOTT (Deal) : Browsing through The Warner Bros. Story recently, I came across a Charlie Murray film of 1928 called Do Your Duty, with screenplay by Vernon Smith. So with High Oaks, Whiffles, Da Costa, etc., going on, the Bounder still found time for an activity Hamilton seems to have known nothing about. And this was roughly a year before Vernon Smith actually went to Hollywood. There is something ironic, I think, about the title of the film, considering the Bounder's well known attitude to duty.

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News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

LONDON

The Burnham on Crouch cottage home of Alan and Myra Stewart was an ideal setting for the August meeting and those who made the journey were rewarded by a very happy gathering.

One sad note, however, was the silence observed for our late esteemed Josie Packman.

Lesley Rowley rendered a fine disquisition about the Greyfriars juniors spending Christmas at the "Bounder's" home and Bunter's hold, temporarily over Smithy and the subsequent solution. Entitled "The Never Welcome Guest" it was Leslie at his best and he thoroughly deserved the applause he received at the conclusion of his dissertation.

Stephen Goddard gave a talk on the author G. A. Henty, illustrated with a copy of the Henty book that was entitled "Beric the Red" and the book about Henty by Guy Arnold entitled "Hold Fast For England." It was very appropriate as "Beric the Red" dealt with the local Essex countryside.

Roger Jenkins completed a double as he won both Roy Parsons' and Alan Stewarts' quizzes.

Roy Parsons read E. S. Turner's article on the Jolly Hockey Sticks exhibition that appeared recently in Punch.

Tea was served in the garden and the usual pictures taken.

Hearty votes of thanks were accorded to Alan and Myra for their very good hospitality.

Next meeting on Sunday, 9th September at the home of Phyllis Godsave, 35 Woodhouse Road, Leytonstone, E.11. Kindly bring own comestibles.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 11th August, 1984

We had 11 people present on a very warm summer's evening. Joe Wood had prepared a well-written article about our Club which would be submitted to the editor of a local newspaper with the hope that we could have it published and therefore encourage some new blood into our group.

Keith Smith presented "My Choice" and selected a piece entitled "The Cricket Match" from "England, Their England" by A. G. Macdonell. This was a most amusing and descriptive piece of writing concerning a village cricket match. For anyone who can obtain a copy of this particular story, it is recommended very highly. Keith was thanked for bringing to light this amusing and very descriptive piece of writing.

Jack Allison never fails to produce something to amaze us - and at this meeting, he excelled himself. At a previous gathering, when we were discussing the virtues of the "sub" writers in "The Magnet" and "The Gem", Jack had happened to mention that he had "subbed" for an author in the well-known boys' scouting magazine "The Scout". Jack was not going to get away with that so easily and so he has asked to elaborate on this statement. Seemingly, one of the regular articles that had appeared in that particular magazine, had been a kind of gossip column - but mainly of nonsense - by a one "Jack Blunt". As in the case of Charles Hamilton, Jack Blunt had quite a number of the articles "subbed" for him - and our Jack had been one of the perpetrators thereof! Jack had written at least eight of these columns under the name of Jack Blunt and from the frequency in which his articles appeared, it would seem that quite a number of other writers were preparing the column too. After visiting the

editor, Jack was asked to write a story for the 1961 "The Scout Annual".

An interesting item was passed round for inspection - a copy of the music for "Tell Me What Is Love" - written by Frank Richards with music compiled by Una Hamilton. Also, for inspection, was a copy of the 1946 "Picture Post" which featured an illustrated article on Frank Richards.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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THE MAYOR & THE MAGNET

by T. V. Jones

A few weeks ago I had a phone call from a friend who was on holiday at Weston-super-Mare. At a second-hand records shop he had purchased for £1 an L/P record which he was sure I would like.

"It's called 'Floreat Greyfriars'", he said, "and I remembered that you are a Greyfriars fan, so I've bought it on the strength that you'll want it."

As I didn't have that famous record, I was delighted. Even more so when, later, my friend handed it over in well-nigh mint condition.

But things didn't end there. He is a TV engineer who, just a couple of weeks earlier, was repairing a set at the home of the ex-Mayor of Cheltenham who retired from office in 1983. In course of conversation, it transpired that the Mayor has always read from one of the old Magnets every bedtime without fail, and he was a great Greyfriars and St. Jim's man.

"Would I tape the record for him?" That was what my friend wanted to know when next we met. But, of course. The tape was duly made, and we decided to deliver it that very night.

The ex-Mayor was thrilled, and, of course, two "Greyfriars men" soon got yarnning away. Down came his 1921 and 1926 Holiday Annuals, and several original Magnets, whilst I showed him the latest Howard Baker reprints and, also, the latest Collectors' Digest which was quite new to him.

It was a happy evening over glasses of lemonade. I should think that my friend will be a Greyfriars man himself, in time.

For one who isn't in our O.B.B.C. Circle he did a wonderful bit of work getting two Magnet fans together and in buying the record.

So Mayors read all about the Greyfriars characters as well as lesser mortals.

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WANTED: UNION JACKS 78, 80, 102, 103, 106, 108, 113, 114, 188, 193, 195, 196, 197, 301, 312, 313, 319, 320, 402, 464, 498, 733, Also ALDINES. H. A. Owen, 28 Narcissus Road, London, N.W.6.

WANTED - Howard Baker reprint of MAGNET 27 (single issue) : Bellfield, 65 Bridge Court, Cradley Heath, Warley, W. Midlands. B64 6LW. Must be in good condition - Your price paid - Phone C.H. 68952.

Many MAGNETS from 1918 to 1940; £1 to £2 each. Champion Annuals : 1925, 1938, 1949, 1952, and complete set of 53 Champions with toys still inside; 1934. Offers. S.A.E. "Olympus", Sandford Mill Road, Chelmsford, Essex. Phone 72570.

WANTED - Any Thompson Books. (Rovers, Hotspurs, Adventures, Wizards, Pre-1955. Also Skippers.) M. Bull, 22 Coronation Gardens, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, PO37 7DZ. Phone 863582 (Evenings)

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Magnets, Gems, Annuals all periods. Early Nelson Lees. Bullseyes, Fun & Fiction, Early Thompsons, Boys' Herald Friend Magazine Nugget, Popular Ranger, Triumph, Union Jack etc. H. B. Facsimiles. MARRIOTT, 27 GREENVIEW DRIVE. Tel. Northampton (0604) 711874.

DON WEBSTER wishes his friends to know that his new address is 2b Holmesdale Road, Kew, Richmond-Upon-Thames, Surrey. TW9 3JZ. Telephone No. 948 - 3055.

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Preparations are now in hand for Collectors' Digest Annus 1984 - your favourite Christmas book. ORDER EARLY TO MAKE SURE OF YOUR COPY!

LONDON OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

(Hamiltonian Library)

Did you know that we are still adding to the two thousand Magnets, Gems, Populars, and monthly Boys' Friends and Schoolboys' Owns that we have in the library? Did you know that a two-month loan charge is still only one penny for a weekly paper and twopence for a monthly one? Did you know that, owing to the generosity of Miss Hood, all Charles Hamilton's Magnets and Boys' Friends were donated to the library and that some still contain his irritated pencil erasures of passages inserted by other hands?

Now that the evenings are drawing in, the delights of reading are becoming even more attractive. If you have not had a copy of our grey-covered catalogue and would like to see what treasures it contains, please send 28½p (one first-class and one second-class stamp) to the honorary librarian:

Roger Jenkins,
8 Russell Road,
Havant,
Hants.,
PO9 2DG.