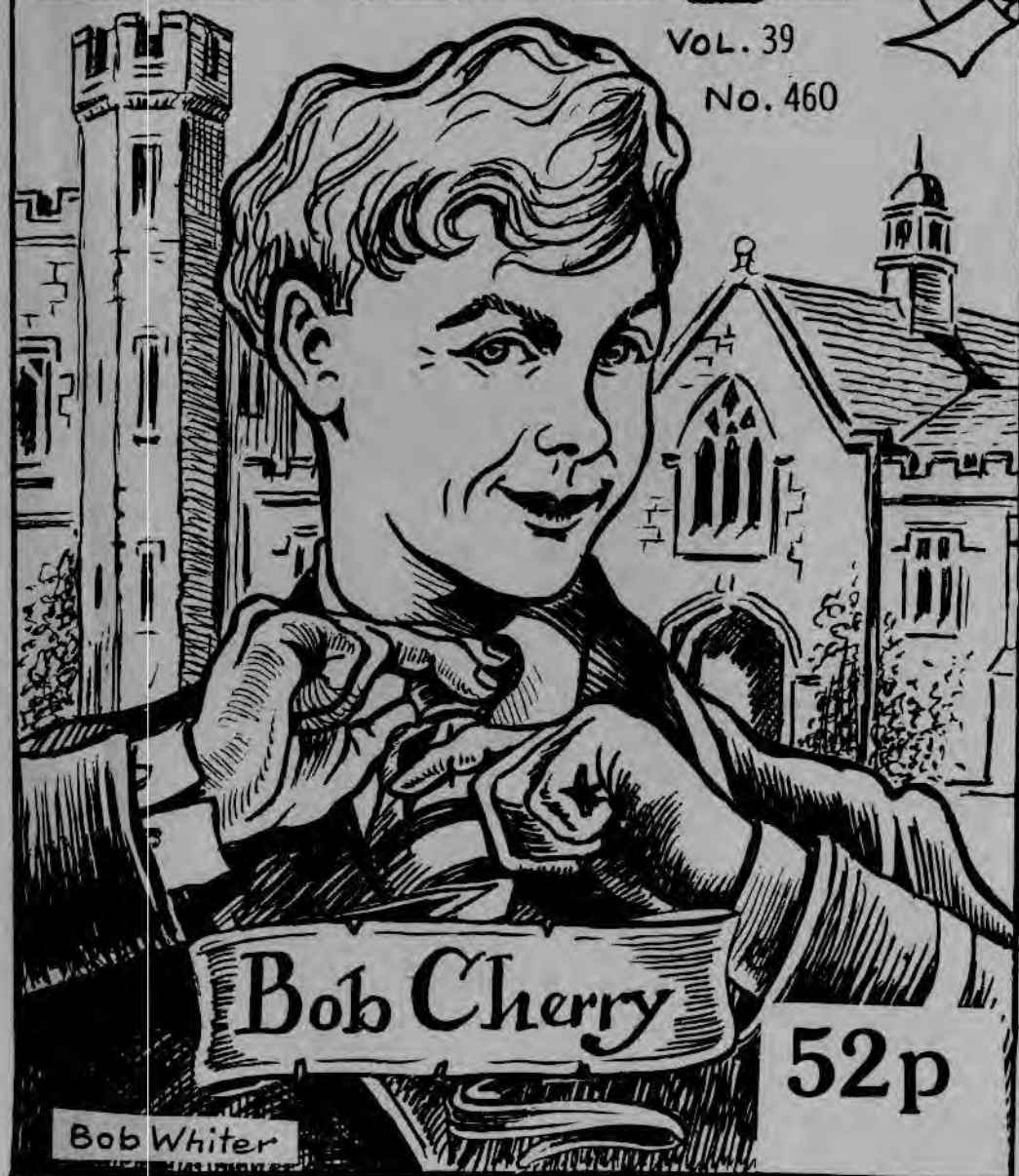


STORY PAPER
Collectors Digest

VOL. 39

No. 460



Bob Cherry

52p

Bob Whiter

A few Volumes of the Magnet (bound), late 30's available.
Just in - More Boys' Own Annuals and Chums.

Large stock of THOMSON's unbound, pre-war and post-war.
Dandy and Beano: only from 1950's. Union Jacks, Sexton
Blake Libraries (all series), Detective Weekly, Thriller, Modern
Boy, and HAMILTON publications.

Lots of "Oldies" in bound volumes. These include Boys'
Heralds, Friends, and Realms. Many obscure titles such
as Boys' Leader, Old and Young, Our Boys' Journal, etc.

Complete Range of Howard Baker Facsimiles and Book Club
Specials in stock, some second-hand.

Your Wants Lists appreciated. So much to offer - try
me with possible purchases and sales. Visitors always most
welcome. Come and See For Yourself. Please give me
a ring. Good prices for collections.

N O R M A N S H A W

84 Belvedere Road, London, S.E.19 2HZ

Telephone 01-771-9857

Nearest Station: Crystal Palace (BR)

* * * * *
* * * * *
* * *
* *
*

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by

W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by

HERBERT LECKENBY

Vol. 39

No. 460

APRIL 1985

Price 52p

(COPYRIGHT. This magazine is privately circulated. The reproduction of the contents either wholly or in part, without written permission from The Editor, is strictly forbidden.)



YOU GREAT, BIG, BEAUTIFUL DOLL!

Nowadays, generally speaking, one does not often hear reference made to "the dole". That observation has been rather blurred in the past year by television's saturation coverage of the miners' strike, with rarely an evening passing without the phrase "Coal not Dole" being displayed in some form or other before our eyes.

Apart from that, the term "dole" has largely gone out of use, being replaced with the term "Unemployment benefit". In a way it comes to the same thing, but sounds less derogatory.

I wonder just when unemployment benefit was first paid.

I don't think it existed before the First World War. But one finds reference to it in Agatha Christie's story "The Adventure of the Clapham Cook" which seems to have been written about 1923. Mrs. Todd's cook has gone off for a destination unknown, leaving her trunk to be sent after her. Mrs. Todd asks Poirot to find her missing cook, and, noting that Poirot is perhaps wondering whether a mere cook is worthy of his gifts, Mrs. T. states emphatically that a good cook is worth more than a valuable piece of jewellery.

Commenting on the independence of domestic servants these days, Mrs. Todd says that "it's all the fault of this dole."

Through the thirties, with mass unemployment in the land, the term "dole" was frequently in use. I wonder who coined the expression. Walter Greenwood wrote a novel "Love on the Dole" which was dramatised into a play on the London stage and frequently put on by rep companies. It was rather a depressing social melodrama and, when made into a film early in the Second World War, it had almost the effect of a period piece.

Finally, I wonder how many recall a Magnet story in which some snob (Skinner, I think) quoted the words of an old song to embarrass Linley (probably): "Oh you beautiful dole, you great big beautiful dole." I'm quoting freely from memory. I think it likely that the story appeared in the late twenties, but maybe some expert can tell us. The song, of course, was a ragtime number, dating, I would think, to 1913 or thereabouts, though I may be wrong.

I mention Skinner because it is a typical Skinnerism - malicious but rather clever, and, in fact, giving the reader a guilty chuckle.

A Hamilton minor weakness was in crediting the heroes with all the virtues, and the black sheep with all the vices, whereas, in real life, for the most part, the virtues and the vices are liberally scattered among us all in about equal shares.

GRIST FOR THE MILL

Last month our Danny, who seems to have been a keen reader of newspapers in addition to his perchant for school and detective stories, reminded us that it is 50 years since the Rattenbury-Stoner case.

Centred in classy Bournemouth, it was a rather sordid little affair, like all murders, but there was evidence of real affection between the two defendents in the case which gives it a poignant human interest. Mrs. Rattenbury, whose wealthy husband was some 30 years older than his wife, engaged a young fellow named Stoner as a "houseboy" - a kind of a man of all work, one assumes, to

do odd chores around the house and garden.

A love affair developed between 19 years old Stoner and Mrs. Rattenbury who was some fifteen years older than he. There was some suggestion that Mrs. Rattenbury might have been doing a Pygmalion-like experiment, understudying Professor Higgins, and trying to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse.

Stoner, however, developed strong jealousy against his master, and battered old Rattenbury to death. When the police were called, Mrs. Rattenbury "confessed" that she had done the deed. When Stoner learned that the lady had been arrested, he went to the police and made what was clearly the true confession.

Both were charged with the murder of Rattenbury. Mrs. Rattenbury was acquitted; Stoner was found guilty and sentenced to death. Later, Stoner's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, but before the news of the reprieve reached Mrs. Rattenbury, she had taken her own life.

Those old classic murder cases, as well as other events which roused considerable public interest, were written up by professional scribes, who, often with tongue in cheek one suspects, slant opinion as to guilt or innocence. But in addition to those writers, there were others who found those real-life cases provided grist for their mill and wrote novels based upon the facts.

Ernest Raymond wrote "We, the Accused", based on the Crippen case; John Rhode wrote "The Telephone Call", based on the Wallace case; and Shelley Smith wrote "The Woman in the Sea", based on the Rattenbury-Stoner case. And, of course, there were others.

Even Charles Hamilton, as we have mentioned before, based a couple of his red Magnet stories on the Archer-Shee case, when a Dartmouth cadet was accused of stealing a postal-order and the local postmistress identified young Archer-Shee as the one who cashed the order at her post office. For two years, Archer-Shee's father fought the Admiralty, trying to clear his son's name.

Hamilton kept slavishly to the real life story, except, of course, for the finish. In real life, the Admiralty merely abandoned the matter, with no cut and dried ruling. But in the Magnet, Bob Cherry was proved to be the victim of a youthful thief who wore a flaxen wig.

I wonder whether there were any other tales, in Hamilton, Brooksiana, or Blakiana which were based on true life happenings. I can bring no other to mind. Can you?

--AND IN REVERSE--

So, while there is no doubt that some novelists have based their stories on real-life happenings, one wonders just how many criminals have based their activities on fiction. There is a distinct similarity between the Rattenbury-Stoner case and Agatha Christie's first Miss Marple story "Murder at the Vicarage." And the Christie story was published in 1930, more than 4 years before the real-life case. That may have been a coincidence, but there seems a distinct likelihood that a post-war poisoner got his ideas from Christie's ingenious tale "The Pale Horse."

A CORRECTION.

In last month's Editorial Chat, I made an understatement, due to a misprint which slipped past me when I was checking the "proofs". Speaking on the stability of prices and the lack of inflation between the wars, I mentioned that the cost of our favourite old papers had been just tuppence, from 1922 till 1930. That should have read 1922 till 1940, will have occurred to most of you.

And passing, for no good reason, from Magnets and Gems to trams, it occurs to me that the tram service in Gravesend, where I spent my childhood, had a branch line of about a mile which my family used constantly as it took us near my home. There was a car every 12 minutes from 8 a.m. till 11 p.m.

"My research..." For twenty years the fare on this line was 1d single, 1½d return. So they had to carry 30 passengers before the conductor collected half-a-crown and the return tickets reduced that amount.

And the cars were only full at rush-hour times. Today, services of that sort are run for the benefit of those who run them. In those days they clearly ran to serve the public.

True, wages for drivers and conductors were low. But what a lot you could get for a bob.

THE EDITOR

ANOTHER C.D. READER PASSES OVER

We are deeply saddened to learn of the death of John Look of Southall, from a heart attack in mid-March. Mr. Look had been a keen reader of this magazine for a very long time.

Collectors' Digest extends its deepest sympathy to Mr. Look's widow and to the family.

Danny's Diary



APRIL 1935.

In Modern Boy, the stories about the School for Slackers have gone merrily on their way. In the first tale of the month, "The War of the Fags", the new Head, Mr. McCann, takes away from the Fifth Form the privilege of having "fags". The next yarn is "Freeing the Fags", and the Head takes a firm stand when he finds that the Fifth Form is still continuing to have fags despite his order.

Next, "The Dandy's Booby Trap, when the unspeakable Mr. Chard falls into the booby trap intended for the Head. They do everything but LEARN at the School for Slackers. Finally "Dorm Three's Night Out". Compton calls the new Head "a dashed usher", but they use other names to describe him - the Blighter, the Bargee, the Bounder, or the Nigger-driver. In this tale, Compton, Seymour, and Darrell break bounds to go to the Okeham Theatre. Darrell is the only one of the three who does not wear evening clothes. And the new Head catches them there. I don't know the artist who illustrates these tales, but I think he is pretty good. He makes his senior boys look very natural.

The Captain Justice stories continue in Modern Boy. Justice is out to restore his stolen throne to the rightful boy Rajah of Bhuristan. There is also a new series of Biggles yarns. Biggles is now trying to make a living as a peace-time flyer. But he's Broke and Stranded in the wilds of British Guiana.

Cambridge has won the Boat Race for the twelfth year running. This year they beat Oxford by $4\frac{1}{2}$ lengths in 19 mins 48 secs.

A good month in the monthlies. In the Schoolboys' Own Library the Greyfriars story is "Kidnappers at Greyfriars". This goes on with the tale about Fishy's father making big money so his son at Greyfriars becomes the target of American gangsters. The other S.O.L. is "Sammy, the Boy-Tamer" which left me a bit cold. Sammy is Sammy Sparshott, the Head of Grimsnade, but it's too farcical for me.

A lovely Granite Grant story in the Sexton Blake Library. It is entitled "The Man with the Black Wallet". A diplomat is left to drown on a wrecked ship, and a young man is set upon in a dark alley in a French city - and in both cases a black wallet is stolen from the victim. A great novel. Other stories in the S.B.L. this month are "The Case of the Murdered Pawnbroker" by Walter Edwards, and "The Martello Tower Mystery" by G.H. Teed.

In the middle of the month the first regular through air service for passengers between England and Australia was started when the giant plane left Croydon Airport.

And on the 14th of the month the clocks went on an hour, and, as usual, it seemed very cold getting up in the middle of the night.

There is a new book out by Agatha Christie, and Doug has bought it for himself. It cost 7/6. It is called "Three Act Tragedy", and the detective is Hercule Poirot. Doug says it is the very best Christie book yet, and I am going to read it for myself some time when Doug is away for the weekend.

The first story in the Magnet this month is "Fooled on the First" which continues the series about the absconding bank-cashier, who may be John James Hazeldene, the uncle of Majorie and Peter.

The series ends in the next week with "Facing the Music" and this one introduces the Hazeldene grandfather, who tells his son, John, to face the music with the police. And all ends happily. A lot of interesting sections in this Hazeldene series, but it won't be one of my favourites when I look back on it in thirty years time.

Next, "Quelch's Easter Egg". Someone has the cheek to send the master of the Remove an insulting message under cover of an Easter egg.

The final of the month, "Jimmy the Fox", re-introduces Jack Drake, the assistant of Ferrers Locke. It is the first of a new series about criminals who plot to kidnap Drake. This first part starts in the Easter holidays, and is mainly set at Cherry Place, which makes a nice change from Wharton Lodge. It seems rummy when people name their houses after themselves, but most of them seem

to do it at Greyfriars. Wharton Lodge, Cherry Place, Coker House, Mauleverer Towers, and so on. Of course, it's swank, really. I spoke about it to Doug, and he sneered at me. He said: "When you get your own house it will be Danny Dump".

Some tip-top stuff at the local cinemas this month. Most of it is musical, but a rattling good drama is "The Barretts of Wimpole Street". It is the love story of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, played respectively by Norma Shearer and Fredric March, with Charles Laughton as a terrifying Mr. Barrett, and Maureen O'Sullivan as one of the Barrett sisters and Una O'Connor a dream as a maid. Just terrific.

Bobbie Howes was in an English comedy "Over the Garden Wall", and Mae West was in "Belle of the Nineties".

"Dames" is an excellent musical with some lovely lively numbers, and it is about a purity fanatic who tries to stop a New York stage show. It stars Dick Powell, Ruby Keller, Joan Blondell, Zasu Pitts and lots more.

James Cagney and Pat O'Brien are great in "Here Comes the Navy". About two life-long pals, but one of them gets advancement in the navy, and the slack one becomes a thorn in the flesh of the officer. A lovely musical is "The Merry Widow" with Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette Macdonald. A foreign nobleman woos a very wealthy widow. Jeanette Macdonald is lovely and sings like an angel.

Another musical was "One Night of Love" about an opera star who rebels against her tyrannical teacher. Grace Moore has a lovely voice. This film is a bit heavy for me, but everybody else praises it to the skies.

One I didn't like much was "Concealment" which is surprising for it stars two of my favourites, Barbara Stanwyck and Warren William. But one that Mum and I enjoyed very much was "Anne of Green Gables". The odd thing about this one is that the main character in the story is Anne Shirley, and the star in the film is also Anne Shirley. The secret is that the star changed her name by deed poll to "Anne Shirley" when she was given the lead in the film. She had made films before when her name was Dawn O'Day, but even that seemed a bit contrived to me.

Over Easter, Mum and I went to stay with one of Mum's cousins who lives at Kingston-on-Thames. On the Monday night we went to the second house at Kingston Empire. It is a lovely theatre. We sat in the Grand Circle where the seats are 2/- each. In the programme were Lew Stone and his Radio Band; the Lloyd Sisters (Alice, Rosie, and Daisy Wood, they are all related to Marie Lloyd

but I don't know whether they are her daughters); plus Toots Pounds who is very vivacious and talented.

The Musical Director at Kingston Empire is Ollie Aston who used to have a stage band of his own.

The first story in the Gem this month is "The Menace of the Red Triangle". Tom Merry received the Red Triangle from India, and it meant nothing to him at first. But it was the visiting card of a Sinister society of assassins in India whose activities had been crushed by Tom's uncle, General Merry. A new Indian boy named Kalouth Das arrives at St. Jim's, and it is Herries' dog, Towser, who saves Tom Merry's life. A pity this wasn't extended a bit into a series.

The month's second tale "The Outcast of St. Jim's" stars the rather remote character, Dick Brooke, the only day boy at St. Jim's. He falls foul of Levison who, by a piece of forgery, gets Brooke expelled from St. Jim's. But Brooke's cockney pal, Harthur, takes a hand, Levison is exposed, and expelled in his turn. But Levison has a sudden health breakdown, and is forgiven by the Head pro tem.

In "Barred by the School" it emerges that, though the Head may forgive Levison, the St. Jim's fellows won't. But Levison saves Cousin Ethel from a mad bull, so all comes right in the end.

Finally "Gussy's Canadian Cousin". And when Cousin Aubrey, from Canada, turns up at St. Jim's, he gives a great shock to Arthur Augustus. Actually he's a down at heel actor employed by Crooke to discredit Gussy, and there is great relief when the real cousin turns up.

The Packsaddle tales and the St. Frank's serial "The Secret World" have continued all the month in the Gem, not to mention all sorts of bits and pieces which take up space which should go to the St. Jim's tale.

- - -

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

S.O.L. No. 241 "Kidnappers at Greyfriars" comprised the final three stories of the Magnet's 5-story Fishy and the gangster series of the summer of 1930. S.O.L. No. 242 "Sammy, the boy-tamer" comprised a number of Grimslade stories from the Ranger. Personally, I have never read any Grimslade, but it seems to have been a Hamilton school which never really rang the bell.

The Sexton Blake Library novel "The Man with the Black Wallet" had originally appeared as "The Secret of the Black Wallet" in the S.B.L. of January 1924.

In the Gem, at this period, 1935, the St. Jim's stories were very heavily

pruned, which was a great pity, for some of the blue cover's finest were just waiting round the corner.

"The Menace of the Red Triangle" had been "Tom Merry's Peril" in early 1912. "The Outcast of St. Jim's" had been "The Shadow of Shame" from two weeks later in 1912. Actually a few weeks earlier there had been another Dick Brooke tale, a heavily sentimental affair, which was not reprinted. The one that did appear in 1935 was a much better tale. The sequel "Barred by the School" had been "The Schoolboy Mutineers" in 1912. The rescue of Cousin Ethel from a bull was about the first time in Gem history that any decent deed had been credited to Ernest Levison, who was to reform so drastically in a few years time.

"Gussy's Canadian Cousin" had the same title when it appeared two weeks after the Cousin Ethel and the bull tale in 1912. (The story omitted was the rather weird and wonderful "Figgy's Folly" which was never reprinted in the Gem.)

The series in the Magnet concerning the Hazeldene uncle, which Danny was enjoying in April 1935, contained some excellent character pictures, especially the weak uncle who was innocent of any crime but was afraid to face the police. Peter Hazeldene of the Remove seemed to have in his character many of the traits of his uncle John, while Marjorie inherited the stauncher nature as shown by her father.

Speaking of Marjorie Hazeldene, Roger Jenkins once observed, expressing it so very well as he always does, that Marjorie Hazeldene was a girl it would have been a great pleasure to know but who was dull to read about.

The Hazeldene series of 1935 had its excellent moments, but I doubt whether it would ever appear among the most popular.

"Concealment" was the English title for a film which had the title "The Secret Bride" in the States.

* * * * *

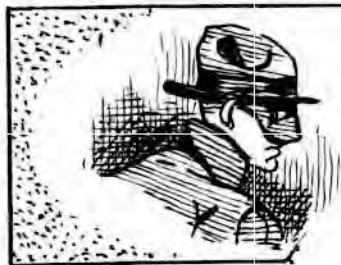
THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S CORNER

After all the cold weather we had, when we often left the heat on all night (after all, I sleep on an old sweater draped over a radiator), the old Ed is dreading what his gas bill will be. I think, in order to pay for it when it comes, he goes "busking" at the supermarket, singing to the long, long queues at the tills. I expect he puts a hat by the till and then bursts into song in his reedy voice. I wonder what song he sings. Maybe "Mairsey dotes and horsey dotes and liddle catsey Twiskas".

Ed does some silly things. He got a plate of fruit pie ready for his own lunch. Then I touched his ankle to show him that I was ready for my own dinner, so he got a plate of Whiskas ready for me. Then he opened a tin of Devonshire custard and poured it all over my Whiskas. It had to be thrown away. I couldn't be expected to eat my Whiskas with custard all over it, could I? Aren't Editors daft?

Our garden, back and front, is a great mass of crocuses - red and yellow, hundreds and hundreds of them. We don't know where they've come from, but there they are. We think it's my Mum sending us a lovely great message of Hope. We think it must be.

* * * * *



BLAKIANA



FORTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKE - PART EIGHT

by W.O.G. Lofts

It must have been around 1954 that Sexton Blake faced the greatest crisis in his whole history. Far more serious than any of his countless escapes from death in his so many thousands of adventures.

The powers that be, were seriously thinking of killing him off for good. This was due to the impending retirement of the editor Len Pratt who had not only completed twenty three years on the Sexton Blake Library but an incredible fifty two years all told at the Amalgamated Press. But also due to the rapidly falling sales, owing to the mediocre and very poor stories. Old readers were obviously deserting the once so brilliant detective story Library in their thousands. One only has to read the reviews of the tales in The Collectors' Digest by the late Gerry Allison to get what I mean. They had no merit at all. The editor had simply got too old for the job, by all accounts never even bothering to read the scripts for errors of detection and plot. Consequently they often went straight to the printers. Many of the themes were more suitable for the Womans' Libraries. One such tale by the so clever writer Rex Hardings in the twenties and thirties, and had now gone to seed, featured a Headmaster of akin to Dr. Locke of Greyfriars marrying a floosie from a night club in a weak story entitled 'The Headmasters Secret' - whilst another by Walter Tyrer had Blake only brought in at the end, as if he had forgotten about him completely.

However, Sexton Blake got a reprieve, when it was decided to give him one last chance. He was to be moderised completely with a new editor with fresh ideas, as well as being bang up-to-date about the modern private-eye. Until a suitable editor could be found a caretaker one was put in the chair in the shape of David

Roberts. David had been in charge of some of the nursery comics including 'Jack and Jill' - was small and very round like a sort of Sammy Bunter - a nice chap who died only last year. The first thing he did was to replace Eric Parker in attempt to change the scene, so that when W. Howard Baker eventually arrived at Fleetway House he found him gone.

Actually a fact not known or realised by many Blake followers today is that the great detective had in a sense been modernised a decade earlier in the middle and late forties. John Hunter in letters and discussion with me said that "Len Pratt insisted that the Library was no longer catering for the juvenile market, therefore writers should pen their stories and plot with that thought in view. I suppose I was the guilty one who gave Tinker the name of Edward Carter. Simply that some readers were writing up and asking what his real name was. Legal authorities deemed that he must have a name for passport, identity card, Social Security, and Tax purposes. Of course he could be called Tinker in words of affection by Blake and others - but to others it was a bit absurd. The name originally was coined to denote a street arab - boys who roamed the streets in Dickens time usually barefooted and were usually covered in Grime". Indeed, the Blakania section edited by Maurice Bond in the early days conducted an almost tirade and crusade to remove the real name of Sexton Blake's assistant. But this 'modernising' had obviously proved completely unsuccessful, this was to all change dramatically a little later, when W. Howard Baker was appointed the new editor. He had strict instructions from P. Montague Haydon to change the image completely, and so the first thing he did was to find him suitable offices in a prominent part of London.

SEXTON BLAKE RULES - O.K.?

by Raymond Cure

Sexton Blake' A name that has engraved itself on the hearts of many over the years. Hundreds of his fans with the passing years have themselves passed on; but Sexton Blake lives on. Sexton Blake is among the immortals.

The 'Old Boys' Book Club' members and friends, and collectors of the old papers, along with the excellent and popular magazine 'Collectors' Digest' and its Sexton Blake Library ensure a place for Sexton Blake in this and future generations; to say nothing of the publication of Howard Baker.

Of course, one is aware that many other detectives stalk the pages of the fictional world, the greatest of these being the brain

child of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, none other than Shrolock Holmes. Readers will recall many others to mind.

What is it then that gives Sexton Blake such a prominent place? After all, most fictional detectives have the backing of some famous author or authoress.

Sherlock Holmes finds himself well and truly propped up by Sir Arthur Canan Doyle, Hercule Poirot by Agatha Christie, Lord Peter Wimsey by Dorothy L. Sayers. People associate the author with the character.

Sexton Blake had no such luck. His contenders for detective fame have each, and everyone, their own particular pedigree.

Let us pre-suppose that you asked a friend the following question, "Have you ever read a Sexton Blake detective story?" He may reply 'I don't think so, who is the author?'

You see he is looking for some famous author or authoress to prop up Sexton Blake. He will look in vain. Blake has no such prop. For better or worse he is the brain child of whoever cares to use their pen in his favour. Be it Jack Trevor Story, Gilbert Chester, Edwy Searles Brooks, Gwyn Evans, Reid Whitley, Antony Skene, Lester Bidstone, Stanton Hope, Allan Blair.

I could go on, with names well known who turned out dozens of Sexton Blake tales, of others who turned out but one.

Every reader of Sexton Blake will have in mind his own favourite author, even as I have, but that does not rule out the fact that Blake is the creation of many, many minds.

Readers will no doubt know of the Bible chapters that gave a list of who begat who.

'Jacob begat so and so; Noah begat - Noahs sons begat'.

I could write Sir Arthur Canan Doyle begat Sherlock Holmes - full stop. Agatha Christie begat Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple - full stop. Dorothy Sayers begat Lord Petery Wimsey - full stop.

However, to write Sexton Blake's pedigree I would need four sheets of this paper to cram all the author's names in.

Some pedigree -- some detective!

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Sexton Blake, the detective who has had more words written about him, more pages filled about him, more authors to back him than any other detective you may call to mind.



A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by An Old Boy

From my visits to St. Frank's I have collected a number of schoolboy expressions that can be frequently heard in the Triangle during breaks, and just as often in the junior studies. But finding the origin of these quaint sayings is something outside my scope. They have probably been handed down over the years and perhaps gathered momentum with new expressions and modes of speech. I am not familiar with the schoolboys' vocabulary in other private schools in the adjoining counties to St. Frank's, but no doubt they have similar sayings.

Perhaps the most gritty of all these emphatic outbursts in "Go and eat coke". Surely its original doesn't lie in "Go and eat cake". Then there's "Rats!" and "piffle". Other less vehement retorts such as "Oh, my only sainted aunt!", "My hat!", "My only topper!"

Some of the juniors have their own particular name for stressing surprise. Mr. Lee, though, stands by "By James!"

Lord Dorrimore's favourite expression is: "By the lord Harry".

I don't think Mr. Crowell, the Remove form master, has any words for such occasions although he is often seen appealing to the heavens for patience.

Dr. Stafford, the headmaster, merely says "dear me" when confronted with a situation that in others would cause alarm.

Handforth frequently uses "By George" to stress a point.

Nipper's favourite is "By Jove". Vivian Travers just remarks... "Well, well" while Tubbs, the page, comes out with "crikey!"

Perhaps in the fulness of time these familiar sayings will die out, but I hope they are not replaced by some of the expletives one often hears in the uncouth and undersirable quarters of Bannington.

Now and again once can hear "crumbs" from the Third formers. Jimmy-Fatty-Little confines his expressions to anything eatable. "By Chutney!", "Great frying pancakes!". Sometimes he includes bloaters. Archie Glenthorne stays with "Gadsooks!"

Archie's valet, Phipps, always imperturbable, merely looks.

Everyone uses... "What the dickens!", though it must be open to conjecture if this expression is somehow related to the memorable Charles.

Although I come across the young ladies from the Moor View School sometimes their modes of expressions seem to be devoid of anything that would raise an eyebrow.

But that... "Go and eat coke!" is something that puts you off your dinner. Anything less palatable than eating coke is to beggar description.

For the moment I cannot think of any more strange sayings that are heard at St. Frank's, but I like old Umlosi's "Wau" when he is aroused!

JUST A THOUGHT

by R. J. Godsave

Since human nature is, more or less, the same as it was thousands of years ago, an author is in the happy position of being able to fall back on the many facets of the past and yet be up to-date. Naturally, the materialistic side of life has made great advances over the years in direct contrast.

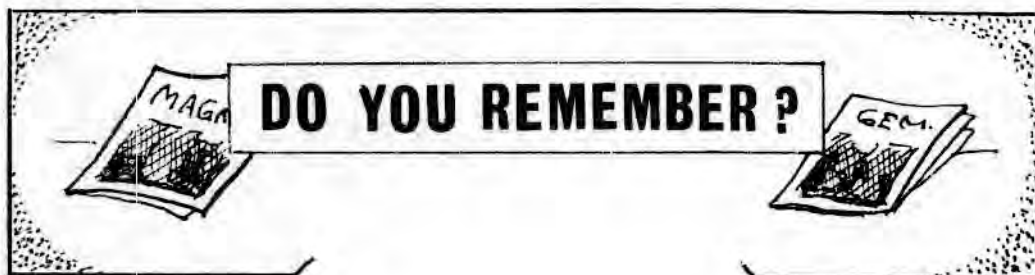
E. S. Brooks introduced Reginald Pitt into the Nelson Lee Library in o.s. 170 "The Coming of the Serpent" in the September of 1918 at a time when he was busy building up the characters of St. Frank's. Here was a character who was a mixture of good and evil, with a clear brain and not lacking in courage. His first term at St. Frank's was spent in schoolboy wickedness, and it was only the bravery and remorse shown by Pitt in his rescue of Watson that he was allowed to remain as a scholar of St. Frank's.

An interested question arises as to whether Brooks ever originally thought of Pitt as a reformed character, or whether it became a question of the thought of the loss of Pitt by his bad behaviour caused him to bring Pitt's better nature to the top.

The following month of May the same situation came about in the matter of Walter Starke. In his case his wickedness was so great that he could not be allowed to remain at St. Frank's even had he performed an act of bravery which might have cancelled out his crime.

Had the Walter Starke series been before the Pitt series then it would appear that Brooks had received the warning light and realised the folly of 'killing off' two - at that time - leading characters. Unfortunately, like so many happenings in this life solutions are not clear cut, and one can only speculate that with the arrival of Pitt with his great potential being in Brooks' mind, the loss of Walter Starke, a sixth former, could be afforded.

No author can afford to 'kill off' a leading character for the sake of a once only highly dramatic story. Reggie Pitt was one of the few boys whom Brooks endowed with a good sense of humour which together with his better nature made him one of the most popular characters in the junior school of St. Frank's.



No. 202 - Magnet No. 1683 - "The Shadow of the Sack"

by Roger M. Jenkins

I can vividly remember, as a schoolboy in that far-off year 1940, purchasing my copy of "The Shadow of the Sack" and being told by the newsagent that it was the final number. I pointed out to him the advertisement for the following issue, "The Battle of the Beaks", but he merely consulted a list from the wholesalers and repeated his doleful remark. And what a story of high drama No. 1683 proved to be! Wharton was placed in a compromising situation by Price and was on the verge of expulsion had not Quelch shown more than his usual prescience. It was a fine study of the Remove master, and provided a leading role for Hacker as well. It promised a great future but, alas, that future was destined never to happen.

The issue was printed in a new small type-face, designed to

save paper but also claimed to be easy on the eye. There was in the editorial column a reference to the late Bill Gander's large Magnet collection (three volumes of which I now possess), and there was also the promised special announcement, which had to be postponed owing to the paper shortage. Charles Hamilton told me that this was the intended formation of a Bunter Club, but what the exact details were to have been I never thought to ask.

The titles of the succeeding stories in the series were also decided upon, and these stories had in fact all been written, but the exact whereabouts of the manuscripts was the subject of differing conjectures. Charles Hamilton gave the impression they were in his possession whereas others claimed they were at Fleetway House. Some time after the war, Charles Hamilton said he was not worried about the missing manuscripts, since he could always write a new Greyfriars story whenever he wished to. Of course, all this raises a further point: why did the Magnet close down so abruptly, in the middle of a series? The answer that was commonly given in collecting circles was to the effect that the author withheld the remainder of the manuscripts under the impression that this would force the Amalgamated Press to grant him a rise in payment, and that the publishers responded by virtually dismissing him - and also the editor and the illustrator, something in the nature of rough justice since the last two, at least, were in no way responsible and felt themselves badly treated after decades of service to the company. Credence is given to this theory by Charles Hamilton's repeated remarks at an interview, "I was a fool". Of course, it is doubtful whether sales of the Magnet would have enabled it to survive another war in any case, but I for one should at least have liked to have the opportunity of reading the remainder of that remarkable series.

* * * * *

DEATH OF J. R. SWAN

News has only just reached me of the passing of popular Jim Swan that occurred as far back as the Autumn of 1982. He was 66 years old. Jim was a very loyal subscriber as well as contributor to C.D. and Annual for a great many years. Unfortunately in the middle of the seventies he developed a severe and long illness that forced him not only to retire early, but also to sell his vast collection of Old Boys' Books. Continued ill health saw him disappear more and more into the background that I lost contact with him. A true cockney, extremely good natured he also once was host to an Old Boys' Book Club meeting at his home in Paddington. He was the very first collector I met when he was editing 'The Little Advertiser' when I visited him on a weekly basis to his 'North Paddington Social Club' for over 25 years. I feel sure his many old friends in the hobby will always remember Jim with some affection.

W. O. G. LOFTS

"THE FAMOUS FIVE - HEROES OR HOOLIGANS?"

by James Hodge

The article by Mr. Tommy Keen in an issue of CD early in 1984 most cogently drew our attention to the many forms of physical violence, often gratuitous, prevalent among the pupils of Greyfriars; violence sometimes extreme to the verge of being criminal and, as Mr. Keen implied, capable of resulting in serious injury. Mr. Keen also rightly pointed out the moral ambivalence of the author inasmuch as whether it was 'bullying' or 'ragging' depending upon whom was doing it to whom.

While allowing for the precedent set by the 'roasting' in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' and the possible tendency for Hamilton to perpetuate in his writings the scholastic mores of his Victorian youth, I have often been intrigued that our Greyfriars heroes ultimate solution to a difference of opinion is, frequently, aggression.

I would like to widen the field a little in the matter of Mr. Hamilton's schoolboys' code of conduct. We are aware that boys are no great respectors of each others persons. Mr. Hamilton, we are told, was a gentle and kindly man. It is reasonable, then, to suppose that the frequent altercations among his characters were only intended to provide his readers with some - shall we say - "Knockabout" humour, a sort of pugnacious punctuation of the narrative. As Mr. Harold Truscott pointed out, in a reply to Mr. Keen's article, none of it is real, therefore no-one really gets hurt.

All right, I will accept that premise and, from a safe distance in time and space, enjoy the 'fun'. What I cannot accept is when I am asked to condone Mr. Hamilton's most virtuous characters behaving like complete louts.

I have recently been re-reading the "Game Kid" series of 1927 and would like to draw attention to the following extract from Magnet 989 describing the Famous Five's "shipping" of Hilton's study:-

"The study table went over into the fender, and a volley of papers shot in all directions, with pens and maps and an inkpot... the expensive carpet was jerked up and draped over the table legs, and several bottles of ink and gum upended over it. A handsome pair of window curtains were jerked down and added; then three of the Removites seized the bookcase and brought it down upon the pile. The bookcase had glass doors. There was not much glass left in the doors as it sprawled over the table legs. Bob Cherry picked up Hilton's marble clock from the mantle-piece, "Seems a pity" he remarked "But clocks were meant to go!" and the clock went - with a crash! Chairs and other articles were piled on the stack. Crockery was sorted out of the study cupboard and tossed on the

pile, in innumerable fragments. Books were added, and pictures, and hassocks, and all the ink the raiders could discover. A quarter of an hour made a marvellous difference in the aspect of Hilton's study. When the Removites had arrived, the study had been the most elegant and expensively furnished at Greyfriars. Now it looked as if an earthquake had struck it-hard!"

That, in my opinion, is a 'tasteless' piece of writing, except for the unpleasant 'flavour' it leaves in my mouth. We learn daily of vandals perpetrating such acts in public places and private homes, and rightly condemn it as mindless hooliganism. That the above extract described a fictional happening attributable to the again fictional paragon products of an expensive education at my favourite fictional school does not make it any more acceptable. The irony is that the object of the "shipping" was to persuade Hilton to behave like a "gentleman"

I have the greatest affection for Hamilton and his work. Robert Roberts in his book "The Classic Slum" wrote - "The Famous Five stood for us as young knights, sans peur et sans reproche".

A pity that, for me, they tarnished their armour when they tilted at Hilton's study all those years ago.

POINT OF VIEW

from E. Baldock

Having read E. Grant-McPherson's remarks under the heading 'Modern Times', I felt the urge to write a commiserative piece in reply.

Let there be no possibility of a misunderstanding, his feelings and my own upon the subject of, what I can only call the rape of the Magnet story, are identical. I became aware that something dreadful was in the offing long before it burst forth into outrageous fact. I had some advance jackets presented to me of what was in store, and a very cursory glance at them was quite sufficient. I had been simmering with indignation for some little time before the full horror became evident. I sat down and penned what I believed to be a succinctly worded letter on the subject to the local newspaper who obliged by giving it a prominent position in its columns, with, however, what I considered a somewhat stupid title: 'Billy Bunter's Jam Tarts Turn Sour'. However, I made my point and received not one dissenting reply.

The whole exercise was, in my opinion, an illtimed and unhappy one. One may imagine what Charles Hamilton would have felt, and said. For once I was thankful that the dear old boy was no

longer with us. I understand that the project left a great deal to be desired from an economic point of view, and I would think it unlikely - thank heaven - that we shall either see or hear any more such nonsense.

Surely it is time for young people to be encouraged and taught once more to express themselves in grammatical Queen's English. We have a beautiful language; why commit sacrilege upon it by such expressions too often found in junior literature today, and which one unhappily hears all too often being spoken.

I do not believe that Mr. Grant-McPherson need have any qualms of anxiety concerning the up-dating - I think this is the term - of the writings of Edwy Searles Brooks when one views the chilly reception afforded to the 'Bunter experiment'. We must congratulate ourselves that there are yet among us some discriminating readers who will always be ready to take up cudgels against the desecration of our youthful idols. To us they are sacrosanct, legends to be jealously guarded and perpetuated, and not in any way to be chipped or altered for the delectation of this or any later age. To the perpetrators of this dismal experiment I would say think carefully before you embark upon any similar undertaking. A loyal readership does not take kindly to seeing its cherished works thus lacerated.

Howard Baker presents the Magnet and the Gem to a later generation in all the purity of its original form. He is performing a valuable service to all those who desire to know just who Harry Wharton and Co. really were, and what made them so popular over the years.

* * * * *

WANTED TO SELL: Comics. Huge Collection of Old English Comics from 1900 - 1960. Rainbow, Tiger Tims, Playbox, Puck, My Favourite, Chicks Own, Lot-o-Fun, Mickey Mouse Weekly, Comic Cuts, Chips, Knockout, Radio Fun, Film Fun, Eagle (single copies plus complete years). All in Excellent condition. Many from the 1920-30 period, have never been handled by Children, and are near mint. Many other titles available. Fair prices. Satisfaction assured. Send you wants lists to: MRS. M. WILLIAMS, 32 CASTLES ROAD, MOORABBIN, 3189, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.

* * * * *

WANTED: Sexton Blakes 2nd series: 57,143,151,214,221,226,433,453,737. 1st series: 197. Aldine Buffalo Bill 4d novels. H. A. OWEN, 28 NARCISSUS ROAD, LONDON, N.W.6.



NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

MIDLAND

As we had received apologies from four regular members it seemed that we would strike a new attendance "low", but, to our pleasure, three new members, Mr. and Mrs. Fahey and their daughter, Patricia joined us, making a total of nine present.

In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman your correspondent took the chair. We discussed the vexed question of the Newsletter. Getting the work done professionally these days is an expensive business. But with some financial help from Tom and me, Geoff Lardner was not too worried over the matter.

Our new members addressed the meeting, Brian Fahey had read the Gem and the Magnet when they were published weekly, and grew to love them dearly.

Refreshments were provided by Johnny and Betty Hopton, I brought a tin of biscuits, and Keith Normington paid for the tea and coffee.

I read a chapter from the only Rookwood hardback, "Rivals of Rookwood", a humorous episode concerning a telephone conversation between Mr. Manders and Lovell. A quiz of 15 questions followed. The prize for the winner was a Howard Baker facsimile of Magnet No. 52. Ivan Webster was the winner with 12½ points.

The last item was another Rookwood reading, found in a Howard Baker Annual. Manders was the victim of a practical joker. An advertisement in a local paper stated Manders had found a bag of gold coins, and the owner was invited to call on Mr. Manders and claim it. Mr. Manders had a stream of callers on a very unpleasant afternoon for him - but good fun for us.

The next meeting will be on 30th April. Good wishes to all O.B.B.C. members everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

LONDON

A happy atmosphere prevailed at the Beckenham meeting. Twenty members made the journey in rather better weather conditions than the last two meetings.

Tommy Keen gave a reading about those two sterling St. Jim's characters, Tom Merry and Reginald Talbot.

Mary Cadogan mentioned the 75th anniversary of the Girl Guides, the reprinting of the Jennings books and also of Evadne Price's stories of Jane and Co. A Jolly Hockey Sticks quiz was won by Mary Cadogan.

Millicent Lyle, pleasing to see her in attendance once again, gave three amusing short stories from memory. These were greatly enjoyed.

A Brian Doyle tape about the history of Radio comedy was played by Alex Cadogan. Bill Bradford gave an excellent discourse on 'Anniversaries'.

From the story "The Battle of St. Sam's", Roy Parsons read a couple of paragraphs and gave twenty words from these and competitors had to spell them as Dicky Nugent did. Chris Harper was the winner. Prizes were awarded to the winner and the two runners up, Don Webster and Eric Lawrence.

An excellent tea, and then a very good gossip. Call-over came all too quickly and it was hail and farewell until we meet again at the Bisley home of Roy and Gwen Parsons on Sunday, 14th April. Advise hosts if attending. Hearty votes of thanks were accorded to Mary, Alex and Teresa for their hospitality.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 9th March, 1985

We had eleven members present on a spring-like evening - a contrast to the weather we had a month ago.

Jack Allison brought to our attention, an amusing advertisement he had recently seen by a health food shop: apparently, the "world famous Frank Richards" would be attending a body-building exhibition to be held locally.

Arrangements were discussed concerning our Coral Luncheon and Meeting to be held on 18th May and it appeared that things were now getting organised.

Harry Blowers presented a quiz on - as he termed them - "well-known" Charles Hamilton characters. At the conclusion, we came to the decision that some of the characters were certainly not well-known - in fact, some very obscure! Our members at times do present some "corkers" and this time Harry exceeded all bounds! The results were abysmal - Harry was thanked for all the work he had put into the research and the amusement he caused us.

Darrell played a tape kindly loaned by Mary Cadogan of the Brian Sibley "William" broadcast on the B.B.C.'s World Service before Christmas. This was an extremely well produced programme and it was much appreciated. It was good to hear the voice of Richmal Crompton.

Our next meeting will be in April, when we shall hold our Annual General Meeting.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

NORTHERN CLUB - 35th ANNIVERSARY

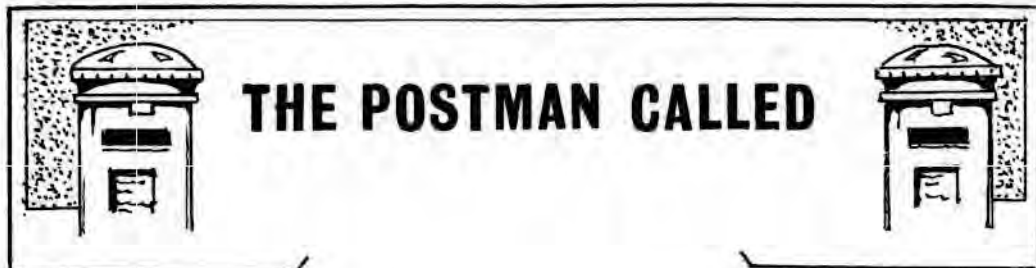
This year sees the 35th Anniversary (Coral) of the forming of the Northern Section of the Old Boys' Book Club. To mark the occasion, we are having a celebratory lunch and gathering at The Mansion Hotel, Roundhay Park, Leeds, on Saturday, 18th May, 1985. We shall be having a programme of activities commencing 12.30 p.m. until 5.30 p.m. with guest speakers. Tickets are limited at £9.50 each for lunch and afternoon tea and a warm invitation is extended to readers of the C.D. and members of other Clubs to join us for the afternoon.

Please contact: The Revd. G. Good, Thornes Vicarage, WAKEFIELD, West Yorkshire, WF2 8DW. Telephone: Wakefield 374009.

FOR SALE: 6 Nelson Lees 1920/33. Nos. 5, 8 Howard Baker Specials Howard Baker reprints: 1; 3; 4; 11; 44; 45; 51; 52; 53. Nelson Lee reprints 2; 3. Also "Crime at Christmas". 1920 Holiday Annual reprint. Magnet Companion; Original Holiday Annuals 1925; 1926; 1927. Chums Annuals 1913, 1916, 1917, 1922, 1931. WANTED: pre-1939 Meccano Magazines.

W. OLIVER, 10 RUMSAM CLOSE, RUMSAM, BARNSTAPLE, DEVON, EX32 9ES. (Tel. (evenings only) 0271 43918.)

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH: Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it you've got to start young.



SYD SMITH (Mona Vale, Australia): I very greatly enjoy the comments in Danny's Diary concerning the old films. A great many other readers obviously enjoy the Diary too. I remember how much I loved the film "Treasure Island", and how I sat in the dark to see "She Loves Me Not", about three times running.

J.E.M. (Brighton): I am delighted that one of your readers was able to identify the source of the quotation you had long remembered.

As you know, Felicia Hemans was once regarded by the 'literati' as the equal of Tennyson and Longfellow. Of that trio only Tennyson now stands high in academic and literary circles, with Longfellow trailing badly and Mrs. Hemans nowhere. Such is literary fashion and it would be interesting to know how they will all rate in a century's time - if, by then, anyone is reading poetry at all. Meanwhile, I suppose it is worth keeping in mind that even Shakespeare has had periods of unpopularity.

On the subject of future reading habits, Duncan Langford's piece, Computing with the Magnet, casts for me some most horrible shadows. Computerised Bunter? Video games of Greyfriars...? Perish the thoughts.

Nevertheless, an excellent and stimulating CD this month, with your comments on Hamilton's pen-names leaving me vastly intrigued. As a Blakian, I also much enjoyed Mr. Loft's reminiscences; 'Pierre Quiroule' has always seemed to me one of The Saga's 'greats'. Regarding Mr. Morley's film list, I believe that Sexton Blake and the Mademoiselle (1935) was based on one of the famous Yvonne series.

Though of course you are right about the appalling effects of The Film Quota but, we should probably never have had any Blake films at all without it. I'm afraid even the most ardent Blakian would have to accept that no film-producer would have made a

big-budget picture about a character who, lamentably, is still regarded as the "office boys' Sherlock Holmes".

T. HOPKINSON (Hyde, Cheshire): Your "School for Slackers" editorial brought back the memories. I have two S.O.L.s about High Coombe - "School for Slackers" and "The Live Wire Head"; some-what battered I must admit, but still readable.

PHIL HARRIS (Montreal): I thought the photo of the "Old Paper Seller" in the Annual was a gem. The grand old publications he was holding would make for a terrific week-end of nostalgic reading these days. Also enjoyed Mary Cadogan's piece on "Clara Trevlyn - Beloved Tomboy". With my sister Ethel, who loved the girls' papers, letting me read them, I was able to keep abreast of happenings at Cliff House, and Clara was my favourite.

And, of course, no Annual would be complete without Mr. Buddle - and this issue contained a double helping. A feast, indeed! Finally, what a grand way to open the Annual - "Christmas at Wharton Lodge", complete with illustrations. Grand stuff, and excellent reading for the Holiday Season.

NICK GODFREY (Leamington Spa): With reference to the Eric Wilmot discussion in the February C.D.

I have numbers 1, 3 and 4 of the Mascot Schoolboy Series ('Top Study at Topham', 'The Dandy of Topham' and 'Sent to Coventry') all of which relate the adventures of Bob Hood and Co. of Topham School. The stories are all enjoyable if inconsequential post-war Hamilton fare, taking in the usual subjects: a new boy's arrival; a booby trap which nets the wrong victim; a Vernon-Smith type (Randolph Picton-Brown, the son of a City millionaire); the saving from drowning of one of the characters... etc.

The (football?) captain of Topham is named Hedley. As you said, it was just Hamilton's weakness for using and re-using the same names. Harold Topham was of course in the Classical Fourth at Rookwood. In 1922, Eric Wilmot was the name of the football coach at Rookwood.

On the whole I still find the Gem slightly more appealing than the Magnet - partially due to the lack of Bunter in the former, he can become a trifle tedious at times. I know it's been said before but if only Hamilton had developed Talbot more, instead of dwelling so much on his past... ah well...

JAMES HODGE (Bristol): Out of respect for my advancing years and subsequent deterioration of my digestive system, I gave up eating doughnuts a long time ago; however, I do a lot of the household shopping for my wife and it seems that I pay a slightly higher price each week for the same purchases; it is most noticeable on every day items, two pence more here, three pence more there and seems to be a continuing process. Yet when cost of living indices are mentioned on the wireless, the sole reason for any increase seems to get ascribed to petrol or mortgage-rate increases, never on the rising cost of soap-powder or cornflakes!!

As I do not own a car or have a mortgage, I tend to get 'niggled' and wonder whether the statisticians ever try having a 'go' with a shopping basket!

I agree - it all started with that "Damned Dot".

T. V. JONES (Gloucester): How S.P.C.D. manages to keep up such a high standard and keeps coming up with fresh interesting material is a source of wonder to me. You must be very proud of the little magazine. I certainly would be if I were Editor. It is not just the interest kept alive about the wonderful world of Hamilton, but the high moral tone of the articles and comments that I appreciate. The C.D. is always the reading I look forward to every week until a new issue arrives - and then I look forward to the next.

* * * * *

MORE ON THE SAINT

Mr. Elliott is mistaken when he says (C.D. 458, Feb. 1985) that the book "Meet the tiger" by Leslie Charteris was later converted to "She was a lady".

"Meet the tiger", published in 1928 by Ward Lock, was the first of the Saint books and was later re-issued as "The Saint meets the tiger". "She was a lady" was first published in 1931 by Hodder and Stoughton and was re-issued in 1941 as "The Saint meets his match".

Many of the Saint books published between the wars did not suggest in their titles, that they were books about the Saint. In later editions these titles were changed so as to include the name of the Saint - probably with the hope that sales would be increased by the use of this well known soubriquet.

The following information is taken from "Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers" edited by John M. Reilly and published by

ORIGINAL TITLE

REPRINT TITLE

The lost hero (1930)	The Saint closes the case (1941)
Knight Templar (1930)	The avenging Saint (1931)
She was a lady (1931)	The Saint meets his match (1941)
The holy terror (1932)	The Saint versus Scotland Yard (1932)
Getaway (1932)	The Saint's getaway (1933)
Boodle (1934)	The Saint intervenes (1934)
The misfortunes of Mr. Teal (1934)	The Saint in London (1941)
The ace of Knaves (1937)	The Saint in action (1938)
Thieves' picnic (1937)	The Saint bids diamonds (1942)
Prelude for war (1938)	The Saint plays with fire (1942)
The brighter buccaneer (1933))	I cannot find any trace of
The happy highwayman (1939))	these being re-titled

As far as I know, all other Saint books have the name of the character in the title, including those adapted from television scripts which were not written by Leslie Charteris.

* * * * *

TWO OF THE BEST

by J.E.M.

One of the most distinguished artists from the juvenile publications of the 1920s and 1930s was H. S. Foxwell. By a happy chance, he was the earliest illustrator of any kind that I could identify by name, for he was one of that tiny elite permitted by Amalgamated Press to sign their work.

I first read Foxwell's signature on the cover of a BUBBLES ANNUAL given to me for Christmas nearly 60 years ago. At that time, Foxwell was also doing covers for TIGER TIM'S and RAINBOW annuals and anyone who has ever seen these glowing little masterpieces won't easily forget them. Their backgrounds were invariably in a dark but luminous blue which threw into gorgeous relief the bright, gay colours of the titles and of the lively antics of such famous characters as the Bruin Boys and Buntz Boys.

Foxwell, of course, did a great deal of work for the comics with which these annuals were linked and he is best known as the definitive illustrator of Tiger Tim. The front page of TIGER TIM'S WEEKLY positively sparkled under his brush and pen for many years. He also became famous for the Teddy Tail strip in the Daily Mail,

after taking over from Charles Folkard, the creator of that popular cartoon mouse.

The second artist whose drawings I quickly warmed to about the same time was a man who won renown as an illustrator of the MAGNET. But I became familiar with his work some time before I encountered the Greyfriars saga, and certainly many years before I learned his name. Like Foxwell, he also drew for BUBBLES and it was in that comic that I first enjoyed his illustrations for the delightful tales of a baby elephant supposedly told by the infant jumbo itself. Both the narrative (author unknown) and the drawings were sheer childhood delight. A more mature reading of the stories reveals an occasional dash of sly adult humour of the kind found in Richmal Crompton's chronicles of William; and the warm, light touch of the illustrations beautifully echoes the mood of these charming little squibs.

Not long after, I again met this artist's work in the AP penny comics - the famous "penny blacks". I especially recall from the end of the 1920s his illustrations for the serial stories in LARKS, famous for their escaped convicts, spectral monks, ill-dressed orphans and pretty girls - often with anxious or frightened expressions! Though these were very different subjects from that comic elephant, the style was for me now quite unmistakeable.

Apart from such work and the well-known drawings for the MAGNET, I later discovered illustrations by the same artist in adult papers like FAMILY JOURNAL which an older member of my own family used to read. Here were stories of wicked factory owners and lovely (often betrayed!) mill girls - the very stuff of melodrama - brought to life by the pen of the man whose true fames was to be realised in drawing Billy Bunter.

Whatever the mood or subject of the work, I loved it all. It is a strange irony that, unlike Foxwell's, this artist's name remained unknown to me for half a lifetime, finally being revealed through the pages of Collectors' Digest. It was, as most of you will have guessed by now, Leonard Shields. And his work still lives. Recently, some of his old illustrations for SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN were revived in advertisements for the play, "Daisy Pulls It Off", an up-to-date spoof on the old girls' school stories.

On my journey through Juvenilia I found other artist-heroes, though I was usually ignorant of their names at the time. Such were Roy Wilson, genius of comic art in the "pennies"; George

Wakefield who left a great impression through his work in two very different periodicals, KINEMA COMIC and BULLSEYE; the great and especially admired Eric Parker of Sexton Blake fame; and Ernest Hubbard in his role as illustrator of the 'Saint' and Raffles in the THRILLER. But, inevitably through the circumstances in which I first met their work, Foxwell and Shields own a particularly warm corner of my memory. They taught me, as a youngster of very tender years, that good artists have distinctive styles. And they taught me how to recognise them.

* * * * *

MY FAVOURITE SPORT STORY

by Esmond Kadish

I am, I confess, not a sports enthusiast. I don't, for instance, sink into an armchair on Saturday evening to watch "Match of the Day", and the messing about with programme schedules on T.V. or radio, in order to accommodate some football fixture; irritates me greatly. Of course, it's a fault I'd love to remedy, and no doubt stems from that "traumatic" day, long ago in the Junior School when, as a reluctant goalkeeper, I failed to prevent the opposing team scoring five times. I suppose it was on that day that I first sadly realised that I was not cut out to be an Alex James or a Dixie Dean!

Thus, a sports-story in the Old Papers really has to be good to arouse my interest. Such a one is "The Captain's Rival" (Gem No. 1,444), which I read again recently. Eric Fayne writes in A HISTORY OF THE GEM AND MAGNET that it had originally appeared in PLUCK, and says that "this excellent yarn, very long in 1912, lost several chapters in 1935. Even so, it's my idea of what a "footer" story should be - less concerned with the tactics of the actual game than in the clash of personality between Kildare and Monteith, and the rivalry for places in the school team between the School and New House. Monteith - jealous of Kildare - is not satisfied with the New House quota in the team, and quarrels with him. In an incident on the football field, Monteith strikes Darrell and is ordered off by Kildare. The other three New House players follow him in a reluctant gesture of support, and a subsequent New House boycott of the school team is only brought to an end when Baker rebels against Monteith, and resumes his place in the St. Jim's team, followed by Gray and Webb. Monteith eventually accepts the situation more or less gracefully.

There's a lighter side, too, to "The Captain's Rival", which is really two stories in one. When the tuck-shop's opening hours are restricted by the Head, Blake organises the smuggling-in of a large supply of "edibles". Figgins and Co. appropriate the tuck, and Tom Merry and Co. are invited to share in a feast by Figgy, unaware that this is really their own snaffled fodder. Hamilton is shrewd enough to let the New House score occasionally; the School House doesn't always win!

Altogether, the story is a happy blend of the serious and the humorous, with the serious predominating. I must say I can't help feeling a bit sorry for Monteith. He's vain, self-centred, and sulky, and Kildare, of course, behaves impeccably throughout the dispute. All the same, it must be a bit galling for a proud fellow like Monteith always to be second-best and unpopular, although, no doubt, it's largely his own fault.

Anyway, it's MY idea of a good sports yarn!

* * * * *

BRRRRH! IT'S COLD, YOU CHAPS!

A few icy thoughts from Jane Bennett

I had planned to go to a club meeting. However, on looking out of the window I discovered a sight more akin to an Arctic tundra than a London road. An icy wind whistles round the corners and the brittle sunshine glitters on the sheets of ice that were formerly pavements.

So I cravenly decided to stay at home in the warm. I haven't the spirit of our schoolboy chums who would, no doubt, be outside taking brisk walks or creating slides in the quadrangle. The New House would be making a foray into enemy territory, armed with snowballs - but I fear they would be repulsed by superior numbers until able to make a stand at the house steps.

Perhaps I might have found a kindred spirit in Cardew who, in one of his lazier moods, may well have been slacking in his study in front of a cheery fire. Otherwise I will have to be relegated to joint the ranks of Racke, Trimble, and Ratcliff and the like who would not be poking their noses out of their studies in this bitter weather.

Despite the cheeriness conjured up by the thought of a White Christmas (and we only missed one this year by a couple of weeks), when

snow does fall as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa, it's neither grateful nor comforting. Is it?

WHARTON LODGE LIVES IN HEREFORDSHIRE AND GREYFRIARS IN GLOUCESTER

by T. V. Jones

Imagine my delight the other day, when tracing the road from ROSS to Gloucester on my inch to the mile Ordnance Survey Map, when I suddenly saw it. Yes, clearly marked, the magic words "WHARTON LODGE",

It is four miles from ROSS and I hope to travel along that road in the Spring there to take a photograph of it. Maybe Colonel Wharton and Aunt Amy will be gracious enough to stand in as well.

I've passed the spot dozens of times, but never realized it had such a famous name for us Old Boys.

But in the City of Gloucester I've often walked around GREYFRIARS. Yes, it's in Southgate Street by the job centre complete with nameplate high on the wall.

WANTED TO PURCHASE: The Skilton/Cassel Bunter hard backs, all 39 titles and all Howard Baker Magnet Vols.

TELEPHONE 0268-693735 evenings or write to:

COLIN CREWE, 12b WESTWOOD ROAD, CANVEY ISLAND, ESSEX.

FOR SALE: C.D. No. 28. Years 1952 - 1963 (most issues).

S.B.L. (3rd series) 320 issues Nos. 149 - 526. Also paperback series complete. 400 Wizard, Rover, Hotspur, Hornet 1962 - 1965.

S.A.E. for details and prices.

A. S. MATHESON, 12 LANGDON CRESCENT, WICK, CAITHNESS, KW1 4JP.

BOB'S BACK!

How delightful to have Bob Whiter, with his charming study of Bob Cherry, back with us again on C.D.'s front cover. Like "Dolly", back 'in the place where he belongs'. In a month or two, Bob's son, Roger, who inherit's his Dad's talent, will be gracing our pages with a picture.