

Story Paper
Collectors Digest

VOL. 39

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MAY 1985



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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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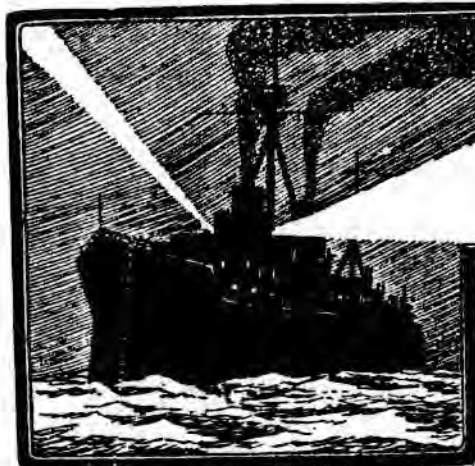
Vol. 39

No. 461

MAY 1985

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A Word from the Skipper.

My idea of happiness is four feet on
a fireplace fender.

JUBILEE.

Fifty years ago Britain and the Empire were celebrating the Silver Jubilee of King George the Fifth and Queen Mary. There were street parties all over the land, decorations of infinite variety were to be seen everywhere, and it was a time of great rejoicing.

The actual Jubilee Day was May 6th, and at 8 o'clock that Spring evening the King broadcast from Buckingham Palace.

He completed his message to his peoples with the words; "Let me end my words to you with those which Queen Victoria used after her Diamond Jubilee, thirty-eight years ago. No words could more truly or simply express my own deep feeling now. 'From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God Bless them'".

The Jubilee celebrations, in fact, lasted throughout the month of May, and very popular features of those celebrations were the processional drives which their Majesties made through, on different days, North, South, East, and West London. The drives were always made on Saturdays, so that the maximum number of people could see them, and at the request of the King, special places on the respective routes were always reserved for school children.

On May 11th, each of the King's sons went respectively to Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland for special Jubilee celebrations. The Prince of Wales had a great reception in Cardiff. The Duke and Duchess of York (later to be King George the Sixth and Queen Elizabeth, today the Queen Mother) were rapturously greeted in Edinburgh. The Duke of Gloucester went to Belfast and on to Londonderry, where he received the freedom of the "Maiden City."

King George the Fifth had succeeded to the throne on May 6th 1910, though the actual coronation did not take place till the summer of 1911. I am uncertain, but I believe the delay was due to an illness of the new King.

I was a schoolmaster in 1935, of course, but I cannot recall how the school celebrated the Jubilee. I imagine that we only had a holiday on the actual Jubilee Day - the Monday - we always frowned on any lengthy breaks in term-time, as they interrupted the concentration of pupils in their work. But I cannot remember.

All the periodicals had "Special Jubilee Numbers" many of them appearing on the Friday before the big week. Modern Boy made a very special splash for the occasion.

Of course, everybody in the land had been keenly looking forward to the big occasion, and I recall that, many months ahead of Jubilee Day, I wrote to Mr. Down, editor of the Gem, and suggested to him that the old story from 1911 "Coronation Day at St. Jim's" should be reprinted in May as "Jubilee Day at St. Jim's". Mr. Down was delighted with the idea, and, writing to me several times then, he told me that my suggestion was going to be put into practice. And it was. And I felt very pleased with myself.

IN RETROSPECT

Just a moment or two now, musing on two splendid Hamiltonian essays which we published in last month's C.D. The first is Mr. Roger Jenkin's appraisal of the very last Magnet of all.

My own experience, in connection with the Magnet which finished so abruptly and so unsatisfactorily, was different from Roger's. "The Shadow of the Sack" had come in normally. Then the following

Saturday, when no Magnet came through my letter-box with my newspapers, I went to my newsagent. He was as much in the dark as I was. "It just hasn't come," he informed me. "Probably be in on Monday." But, of course, it wasn't in on the Monday, nor during other days of that week when I looked in hopefully on the newsagent. He just shrugged his shoulders, and said he had received no notification, so we could only wait and see.

Roger believes that there is some mystery as to what happened to the other stories in the series, the first story in the series having already appeared in that sad last issue. I have long held the opinion that the succeeding stories, of which Hamilton gave the titles years later, were never written. I believe he wrote a few chapters of "Battle of the Beaks", and that those few chapters were passed to the compiler of the book "Yaroo" of a decade or so ago, and that they featured, without any very convincing explanation, in that book.

In my opinion, if the A.P. had possessed those stories, they would have published them. (The S.O.L. had not ended at that time.) But even allowing for the possibility that they might have been lost at the Fleetway House - a most unlikely contingency - it is, in my opinion, beyond belief that any sane professional writer would have relied on one just manuscript. In addition, he must surely have taken at least two carbon copies of his work to allow for mishaps. And Hamilton was a very experienced and very shrewd professional writer.

So it was not just the disappearance of one manuscript. The author would have had two more, and it would be completely incredible that they, too, disappeared without trace.

In my book, the other stories in the series were never written. And, if anything turns up to prove me wrong in the matter, I shall be a very surprised old gent.

The other writer in last month's C.D. who gave me food for thought is Mr. James Hodge who discussed an incident when the Famous Five "shipped" Hilton's study. James saw that "shipping" as a tasteless piece of vandalism, more suitable to these nasty eighties than to the late twenties when the description was written. Our friend has a valid point, and I agree with him.

It brings to my mind a "Let's Be Controversial" article I wrote for C.D. some 20 years ago. It may not be inappropriate to give here a short extract from it. Here it is:

'Broadly speaking, the Famous Five was an unlikely combination. In fiction it worked out well; in real school life, a thread linking five into close friendship would be improbable. Even allowing for the fact that breeding counts, five fellows going around together

could easily become a little gang of rowdies. If Wharton and Nugent enjoyed an ideal friendship, as they did, helped by being in the same study, they would hardly have sought three more from other studies down the Remove, to diffuse the friendship.

Yet the Famous Five, due to the superb craft of their creator, got by with much success. We would not have had it different.!

THE EDITOR.

DEATH OF ANOTHER LOYAL C.D. READER

We are deeply saddened to record the death of Mr. Leslie Wilkinson of Fawley, who passed to a higher life at the end of March. Mr. Wilkinson had been an enthusiastic reader of this magazine for many years.

Mr. Wilkinson's widow, Doreen, has written us as follows: "We both collected books - boys', girls', and children's - and I will try to complete his collection for him. We read C.D. and enjoyed it for about 12 years, and I would like to continue to receive it. May I take this opportunity to thank you for the pleasure C.D. and C.D. Annual gave us both. You must have put so much time into it and I do not recall it was ever late."

Mrs. Wilkinson has sent me on an article which Leslie had completed just before his death. It will appear in our next issue.

Our very deepest sympathy goes to Mrs. Wilkinson in her very great loss.

THE DAY THE MAGNET VANISHED

from Peter Hanger.

My experience of the last day of the Magnet was similar, but different from Roger Jenkins's. I was not told of the closure on purchasing "The Shadow of the Sack". I went to the newsagent on that fateful Saturday at 7.30 a.m. (couldn't wait for the delivery boy) and was told that "The Battle of the Beaks" had not arrived - yet.

I was not unduly alarmed, as this had happened before. But when I was told same thing at 10.30 a.m. I became cross, and it wasn't until 3 p.m. that I was told there would be no more Magnets.

I was shattered. I had only been taking a weekly Magnet for seven months and for years afterwards I believed that my great interest in Greyfriars was because I did not have my fill of it as a boy. It wasn't until I knew of fellows like yourself, who had been reading the Magnet for decades, that I realised that this was not so.

A small group of us held a "court of enquiry". The first theory put forward (soon discarded) was that Frank Richards had been "called up". But we quickly came to the conclusion that Frank Richards had died.

Danny's Diary



May 1935

God save the King! It is 25 years since King George the Fifth and Queen Mary came to the throne, and the whole country has been celebrating with joybells, street parties, fireworks, and special issues of all our favourite papers. Jubilee Day was actually May 6th, and we had the day, a Monday, off from school, but the entire week was given over to rejoicing.

In Modern Boy, the School for Slackers tales have been going hot and strong. In "Captive of the Fags", the month's opening yarn, the juniors screwed up the Head - the new man McCann, in his study. The Biggles story in that issue is "Biggles and the Blue Orchid". Biggles is rescuing a South American President's daughter who is held to ransom by brigands in the forest of Death.

The Captain Justice tale is "Tiger Priests of the Hidden Land".

Then came the Special Jubilee Number, and very royal and loyal it is. "Fourth Form Avenger" features the School for Slackers, with the Fourth out to wreak vengeance on the new Head. "Buddy of Bhuristan" is the Capt. Justice tale, with the gallant Justice going through peril to help at the Coronation of the Boy Rajah, "Sandy's Lagoon" has Biggles bidding for two fortunes.

Next week brought "Captain Justice on Secret Service". He is the only man who can save Britain from an aerial bombardment which will wipe her off the map. "Biggles and the Head-Hunters" has our hero besieged by cannibals in the New Guinea jungle. "The Prefects' Revolt" is the High Coombe story. They mean to put the new Head's head (sounds odd!) in a bag and tie him up. The plot can't go wrong - or can it? This is the last of the present High Coombe tales.

The month's last issue of Modern Boy brought "Biggles' Castaway". They find a Chinaman in the Indian Ocean, "Secret of the Mystery Factory" carries on with Captain Justice's efforts to save Britain. I wonder whether School for Slackers will be coming back.

The "Old Boy" says everyone has heard of the Seven Ages of Man. But what about the Seven Ages of Dog? Pup-age; Walk-age; Bark-age; Steal-age; Fight-age; Old-age; Saus-age.



BIGGLES

ex-War Ace, his chum Algy, and Smyth, his old War-time mechanic, with their Vandal amphibian plane, flying their way back by Adventurous stages from South America to England, never miss a chance of grabbing at Opportunity with both hands.

In this splendid story they make Two Bids for Fortune—and pile up Tremendous Thrills !

The South African cricketers are over here to play all the counties plus the Test Matches. Last summer we were licked by the Australians and in the winter we were licked by the West Indies. Let's hope we do better this summer against South Africa.

My Dad takes a lot of persuading when it comes to getting him to buy things. I told him that in a year or two we shall actually be able to see all the programmes on the wireless. My Dad made a rather wicked answer, though he is normally a good man. He said "Heaven forbid" I told him that there are now over two thousand television sets in the country, and one can buy a new one for £5 upwards, or you can buy a kit to make one yourself. But my

Dad was stony-hearted.

The government has introduced a new act - a driving test. Before people can drive cars they have to pass a driving test, so that they know when to turn right, when to stop, how to slow down, and when to turn over. When you have passed your test you can get a driving licence. I suggested to my Dad that he should take a driving test. He merely stared at me stonily. I showed the latest list from the British Rover Car firm. A new Rover 14 is £298, but you can get a new Rover 10 for £248. My Dad isn't interested. Oh, well.

Two excellent tales in the Schoolboys' Own Library this month. The Greyfriars one is "Pop' of the Circus". Cecil Popper has had to give up his life as a circus performer, and come to Greyfriars as a junior. So he tries hard to get expelled from the school so that he can go back to the circus. Great little tale.

The other S.O.L. is "The Trail of Adventure" in which Tom Merry & Co go as the guests of Wil Drake for a holiday on the Bootleg Ranch in the Canadian Wild West. I enjoyed this one very much, too.

In the Boys' Friend Library I had "The Rocketeers" by Murray Roberts. This is a Captain Justice story of a trip to the planets. In the Sexton Blake Library I had "The Nursing Home Crime" by Coutts.

At the end of the month the trial took place of George Stoner and Mrs. Rattenbury, accused of the murder of Mrs. Rattenbury's husband. Stoner was found guilty and sentenced to death, but Mrs. Rattenbury was acquitted. On the last day of the month, Stoner's death sentence was changed to one of life imprisonment owing to his youth.

On the 8th of the month Amelia Earhart left Mexico City for a non-stop solo flight to New York -2,100 miles. She did it in 14½ hours.

At the end of Jubilee Week, Mum and I visited Aunt Fan at Plaistow, and one night we went to the first house at Ilford Hippodrome. Top of the bill were Elsie Carlisle (she sang "Home, James, and don't spare the horses") and Sam Browne. A lovely act. Another gorgeous act was Wilson, Keppel, and Betty, a farcical eastern sand-dance act - just terrific. Also Nornio King, a black-faced comedian, and Collinson and Dean who are described as B.B.C. comedians because they are often on the wireless. A splendid bill.

A month of lovely stories in the Gem. "Redfern's Record Rag" is just terrific, and I loved every word of it. The new scholarship boys in the New House seem to know nothing about cricket. Redfern

rescues Tom Merry from drowning, and asks, as a reward, that he and his two pals shall have places in the coming cricket match against the Grammar School. Everybody is downcast, and the new boys are hated - but there is a big surprise on match day.

Then the Jubilee Number of the Gem. The story is "Jubilee Day at St. Jim's". The chums have £200 as a result of the treasure they found and lost when they went to the South Seas. And they blue it on a big Jubilee celebration. Lovely tale.

Then another tip-top cricket yarn "For the Sake of His Side". Langton, who used to be a mild type of rotter, is in the power of a seedy bookmaker named Levy. Levy will be ruined if St. Jim's wins the game against a county side. He orders Langton to throw his wicket away.

Finally, "The New House Rivals", another tale of the rivalry between Figgins & Co and the New Firm of Redfern & Co. A grand one, too.

The Packsaddle stories and the St. Frank's serial "The Secret World" have continued throughout the month in the Gem.

Mum had the lovely Jubilee Double Number of "Answers" - 68 large pages for 2d, and a giveaway book of Royal pictures. Mum says she will keep it always.

It is exactly a year since the Dionne quins were born in Canada, and they have been celebrating their first birthday.

A pretty good month at the local cinemas. Wallace Beery starred as P.T. Barnum, the famous circus proprietor, in "The Mighty Barnum." I liked this one. Charles Laughton was excellent as an English butler in "Ruggles of Red Gap". An American rancher takes his butler out to the Wild West, and his effect on the Americans provides great fun. A big cast with Zasu Pitts, Roland Young, Charlie Ruggles, Mary Boland, etc.

Claudette Colbert starred in "The Gilded Lily", about a poor typist who has to choose between a poor reporter and an English aristocrat. She decides on the poor one. Sigh! With Fred Macmurray and Ray Milland.

I forget who starred in "Ten Minute Alibi but it is a rattling good film, very tense, from a very famous London play.

"Radio Pirates" hadn't got much story, but is fairish, with a number of well-known wireless names including Roy Fox and His Band, Teddy Brown, the large Xylophonist, and Hughie Green. "Bordertown" is a tip-top thriller melodrama about a wicked woman who bumps off her dull husband. It stars Bette Davis and Paul Lukas. Another excellent and tense thriller is "Four Hours to Kill" about a killer gangster who goes berserk during an evening out at a theatre

starring Richard Barthelmess and Ray Milland.

Finally, Doug had tickets for the opening night of a brand new cinema, the Regal, at Godalming in Surrey. He took me with him. They have a special pre-release film, for the opening week - Leslie Howard, Merle Oberon, and Raymond Massie star in "The Scarlet Pimpernel". A truly magnificent British film, produced by Korda.

A wonderful month in the Magnet, which always comes up to expectations. The Easter holidays at Cherry Place are still in progress, with Jimmy the Fox lurking in the background. The Fox and his gang are determined to kidnap Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke's assistant. They want to secure the release of their gang leader, who has been put in gaol by the work of the detective. The month's first tale is "At the Eleventh Hour", with Bunter frustrating the knavish tricks of the gang.

The final story in the series appears in the Magnet's Jubilee Number. It is "Up For the Jubilee". The chums leave Cherry Place to go to London to celebrate the King's Silver Jubilee - and they also help to finally knock out Jimmy the Fox and his gang.

Then came the start of what promises to be a great series, with my favourite, Harry Wharton, in the lead. The opening tale of the series is "Harry Wharton's Double". Colonel Wharton has befriended Ralph Stacey, the son of a distant relative, and he is the spitting image of Harry. And the two are spitting at one another right from the start, for Stacey is sent to Greyfriars, where the Colonel hopes both boys will be great pals. They aren't!

Final of the month is "Rivals of the Remove", when Stacey proves to be an exceptionally fine cricketer, which puts Wharton's nose a bit out of joint. Of course, both boys are jealous of one another. And Stacey's misdeeds are often laid at Wharton's door. The series continues next month.

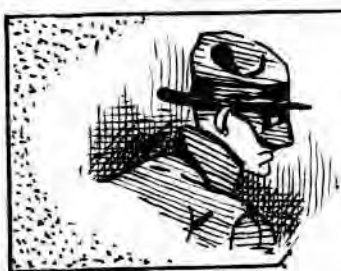
A rather sad note to end the month of rejoicing. The King has contracted a severe chill, and there is concern for his health.

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

May 1935 was the first time, for many moons, that a reprinted Pierre Quiroule novel did not feature among the four stories offered by the Sexton Blake Library.

The 1935 Gem story "Redfern's Record Rag" had been "In Honour Bound" in the Spring of 1912. After the first few stories about Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence no further mention was made of the fact that, originally, they were "scholarship boys". "Jubilee Day at St. Jim's" had been "Coronation Day at St. Jim's in the summer of 1911. It was at my suggestion that the Coronation Story of 1911 became the Jubilee story a quarter of a century later. "For the Sake of His Side" had appeared under the same title in the Spring of 1912. "The New House Rivals" had appeared (with a picture palace story, possibly by Mr. Down omitted in between) under the same title in the Spring of 1912.

So the Stacey series had now come on the scene for Danny in May, 1935. Though the "golden age" of Greyfriars stories was really well passed by that time, the Stacey series, was, in my opinion, the finest long story that Hamilton ever wrote. Superb story-telling and beautiful character-painting made the Stacey series unforgettable. No finer school and cricket tale was ever written by Hamilton - or by anyone else.



BLAKIANA



FORTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKE (PART NINE)

by W.O.G. Lofts

Berkeley Square was built as far back as 1602, when until just after the last War, its large stately houses lodged many famous people. Crippling taxation eventually made many move out, and the landlords found it was more economic to convert many into either luxury flats or offices. The Square had also become even more well known by the popular song "When a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square" composed in the late thirties I believe. That nightingale that sang in the centre almost a small park - of the square must have sung more loudly when in 1955 Sexton Blake the world famous detective decided to rent a suite of offices. Behind the door plate of 'Sexton Blake Investigations' worked a beautiful young secretary named Paula Dane, a pretty young typist Marion Lang, and even a receptionist Miss Louis Pringle. The great detective was now surrounded by three doting females, as well as an office cat named Milly. This siamese pussy was based on a real life name-sake in the Howard Baker household at Kensington. It scratched me once quite deep, so that I had to go shortly afterwards to a London Old Boys Book Meeting with my hand in a thick bandage. Alas, Milly died some years ago, and now has a small grave in Mr. Bakers garden in Wimbledon.

Blake of course still retained his house in Baker Street, with the faithful Mrs. Bardell in attendance, though Pedro had been retired to the country. Baker Street built in 1755 which also housed the immortal Sherlock Holmes as well as Charles Hamilton's creation

Ferrers Locke and his assistant Jack Drake of the Greyfriars Remove - was curiously named after William Baker - a prominent citizen of St. Marylebone - and a distant ancestor to William Arthur Howard Baker the new editor of the Sexton Blake Library.

I first met Bill Baker around 1956, when at Fleetway House I called in his office to see him. He was sitting behind a large desk that my sharp eyes denoted held a Sexton Blake bust. Large cabinets contained reference books - whilst on the window sill housed office file copies of the Library. We talked a great deal about the new Blake - but even more about Greyfriars and The Magnet! An avid reader of the stories from the mid-thirties till the end, as well as The Schoolboys' Own Library - that had reprints of earlier tales. Little did he dream then that many years later he would be reprinting practically the entire run, as well as having his own publishing business.

He was assisted by James Stagg - a likeable man who later wrote a few Blake stories. 'Jim' had worked on answering readers queries on the famous Daily Mirror 'Live Letters' column. Later he won the E. Nesbit Childrens Award for childrens Literature and went free-lancing. He was replaced as main assistant by Ralph Coveny - another very likable chap, who when leaving much later on, worked at Covent Garden, Opera House, in charge of the spotlight controls.

It could not have been long before he died that Herbert Leckenby visited Fleetway House - when I introduced him to Bill Baker. It was probably one of the greatest thrills of his lifetime to visit the home of so many of his greatly loved papers. He was a little overawed by it all. He took his hat off in respect as we walked up the marble steps to the reception. I also briefly introduced him to several of the older editors there - been there since pre-war days, and he was a very happy man. "This has really made my day Bill" he said.

MY LUCKY DAY'

by Peter Lang

I recently experienced one of those joyous moments that book collectors occasionally enjoy while involved in the search for undiscovered treasures. I was browsing through the shelves of a tiny and out of the way bookshop when my eye was attracted to a book which had a stout but rather battered binding and the rather puzzling title embossed on the spine declaring that the book contained: "Stories".

I decided to investigate the contents of the volume and you can imagine my surprise and delight when upon opening the book's cover I found that the title page was an announcement that the Special Summer number of the Union Jack Library was a Detective Romance entitled: "The Death Club".

I could hardly believe my good fortune, for a quick examination of the remaining contents of the book revealed, I had indeed uncovered a real treasure trove - the book contained a number of bound copies of the weekly editions of 'The Union Jack'.

I quickly sought out the bookseller and I paid him the price he asked for the volume which was £2.50 and I shot off home to examine my find.

My further examination of the book revealed that the contents consisted of sixteen copies of 'The Union Jack' five titles from 1941 and eleven titles from 1916, and a copy of 'Pluck' No/595 dated 25.3.1916.

What a thrill it is for a collector to literally stumble upon a treasure of this kind - a wonderful series of stories featuring Sexton Blake and Tinker featured in 'The Union Jack' during the days of Great World War - marvellous.

DISPOSING OF COLLECTION. Mint bound volumes of Adventure 1922, Nos. 27 - 52. Marvel 1912, (441 - 460). Gem 1921, (673 - 698). Champion 1945/6; 1948; 1949 (years). 8 Bound Volumes Strand Magazine 1892-94 - 95 - 96 in half-years. All but one with Conan Doyle Offers, please. About 60 Annuals: Dandy, Topper, Beano, Hotspur, Victor etc. Magnets, Boys' Mags, Nelson Lee, and other papers. Also about 500 asstd. Comics: dandy, Topper, Tiger, Victor, etc. S.A.E. for full list

E. McPherson, Upper Milton, Wells, Somerset.

FOR SALE: Howard Baker reprint volumes. First 40 Book Club; first 42 Greyfriars Press. Some Gems and Holiday Annuals. Plus some originals from £3. S.A.E. for list.

John Beck, 29 Mill Road, Lewes, Sussex.

SALE: "Biggles Breaks the Silence" (first edition); "Billy Bunter's Own"; S.O.L. 271, 326; C.D. (earliest - June 1974). WANTED: S.O.L. 145, 147, 230, 283, 308, & Rookwoods.

Maurice King, 27 Celtic Crescent, Dorchester. DT1 2TC.
(Dorchester 69026).



A LETTER FROM ST: FRANK'S

by An Old Boy

The following incident was related to me by Nipper from whom he was told it by Nelson Lee. A Travel film was being shown at the Palladium Cinema Bannington about the African CONGO and recollections of the St. Frank's Holiday Party in the CONGO some time ago enhanced Mr. Lee's desire to see it.

Having interested Mr. Crowell, the Remove Form master and Mr. Langton, the 6th Form master, to accompany him, Mr. Lee set out one wet half holiday for Bannington. Arriving at the cinema he booked tickets and entered. There appeared to be a lot of children and realised it must have been a school half-day holiday too for local schools.

But sitting through an exciting Western before the Travel film was shown was an experience that will never be forgotten.

Judging from the views of the children, the cowboy villain was a thoroughly bad sort, and the howls of execration hurled at him must have guaranteed a booked hall for the rest of the period. It is not difficult to imagine the feeling of three staid schoolmasters enduring the noise and clamour of excited school kids watching a thrilling Western film. Nelson Lee will make sure henceforth not to visit a matinee when local schoolchildren are on holiday.

I have realised the difficulty of writing about the Moor View School for Young Ladies per se. I have described from time to time those girls who have friends at St. Frank's and mentioned them in these Letters, but of the Moor View itself it becomes a little harder for I think it must be much more difficult to run a boarding school for girls than for boys.

Girls' characters are much more complex, they are greater individualists, and most girls of the age that are at the Moor View School do not even understand themselves. They are more sensitive to praise or ridicule, and those "crushes" so common among school-girls must be difficult for a mistress to deal with wisely. That is the view expressed by Esylt Newbery in her autobiography. One cannot disagree with her views.

I cannot help thinking of the enormous amount of time some of the St. Frank's juniors had spent on holiday trips abroad. It would be interesting to know what was their most exciting and thrilling adventure. Yet many exciting moments existed at St. Frank's during rebellions and mysterious and eccentric new masters. Which leaves me to remark that recounting the history of St. Frank's one never need be lonely and forgotten.

CELEBRATIONS

by C. H. Churchill

Some time ago our esteemed Editor included in the Nelson Lee section of the C.D. an article of mine which pointed out how strong E.S.B. and the N.L.L. were over the years on celebrating anniversaries and such like. I remarked that we always had Christmas stories or even short series at the festive season and, of course, every summer we had the famous holiday adventures. In addition, at the new year we often had stories of a "New Year" flavour such as No. 395 old series 30/12/22 "Archie's Pantomime Fairy". As for Eastertime we were regaled with such as No. 253 old series 10/4/20 "St. Frank's at 'Appy Ampstead'. One year we even had an Easter adventure series. This was the Mordanian series in 1921 old series Nos. 305 to 311 inclusive. Bonfire night and Armistice day were not forgotten either. We had several stories on these over the years.

There is one occasion, however, which I have never seen mentioned as yet and that is No. 500 old series 3/1/25 "The Schoolboys' Pantomime", a milestone if ever there was one. After spending Christmas at Glenthorne Manor the party proceeded to Grey Towers in Berkshire, after spending a day or two at Lord Dorrimore's London house. The juniors, aided by the Moor View girls, got up a pantomime presented in the local village hall, and entitled "Babes in the Wood." Now this is not very startling as a plot but as we read on we find that the story develops into the actual script of the pantomime, E.S.B. describes the action of the characters and their very words which are all in a kind of verse. A sample is as follows:-

Widow Pancake (Reggie Pitt)

"Dear, dear, dear! Good gracious me!

What's all this I see?

Who's making all this commotion?

It's worse than all the ocean!

Chorus (in unison)

"The Baron's coming and wants his dinner.

What about it you slow old sinner?"

Widow Pancake.

"Be off with you and leave my kitchen!
To get to work I'm surely 'itchin.
And where's my boy the lazy wretch?"

Dairymaids (in unison)

"He's gone away the milk to fetch."

There is about eight pages of this doggerel, if one likes to describe it as such. All the same it is quite amusing and it took some imagination on the part of Mr. Brooks to produce such a length. My point is that it was something special with which to celebrate No. 500 and I have yet to find anything in any other paper to equal it.

"CYCLING IN THE RAIN"

by William Lister

Of course, I opened it with a certain amount of nostalgia; unashamed, uninhibited nostalgia. I say unashamed because there are those (critic's of the fans of the old papers) who assume that to indulge in a little nostalgia is to be below par, so to speak.

Those who have never known the joy of turning the pages of one of the old papers (after the lapse of many years) are scarcely fit to judge those who have. So banish the thought of such old fogeys and join me in turning the pages of yesteryear. Yesteryear, being the pages of the "Monster Library No. 12 - "The Mystery Master" by Edwy Searles Brooks.

From the inside cover I am thrust into my own world, where I am introduced to the free gifts offer being a set of coloured stand-up figures of Douglas Fairbanks, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, and Tom Mix and so far as I am concerned the greatest of these are Harold Lloyd and Tom Mix. I remember collecting them. Whatever became of my set?

However, to business, and I mean the tale itself.

The first five chapters open the adventure with a bang! A fine hot sultry afternoon and three St. Frank's boys - Monty, Tommy Watson and Nipper are out cycling. Trouble is a huge dark cloud in the distance, suddenly becoming a mass of black cloud rolling overhead, causing an uncanny premature darkness.

Here was the threatening of a summer storm, and to the consternation of our three cyclists, blazing flashes of lightning like great jagged forks of livid brilliance began to light the sky.

The rain began to fall in a solid mass, a blinding roaring sheet

of water, but the whole incident culminates with "a ball of fire, ablaze with brilliance shot out of the clouds to fall in a neighbouring field; a meteorite?"

The St. Frank's boy's approached the scene, somewhat excited they got to the footbridge and crossed the river.

The sky was clearer, but the thunder still pealed, and the lightning was incessant. They hurried towards the spot.

What was it that they had seen falling from the clouds? and there, my fellow-hobbyist, I leave you, and you have only reached the end of chapter three of a fifty-two chapter story. Of spies, and Chinamen, space fails me to tell, and all laced with the E. S. Brook's brand of Humour.

I do not know if any of my readers share my weather "quirk". When I view the T.V. advertisements on Summer overseas or British Holidays or read the holiday brochures I like to note the sun.

Living in Blackpool, what nicer to see than the five miles of golden sands bathed in golden sunshine, and the crowds of holidays makers basking by the blue, blue, sea. I like the sunshine on my holiday!

But in my reading, give me the dark foggy nights, the blizzards and deep snow. The screaming gales, the dark clouds and thunderstorms, the heavy seas.

It all spells excitement, and "The Mystery Master" spells this kind of excitement.

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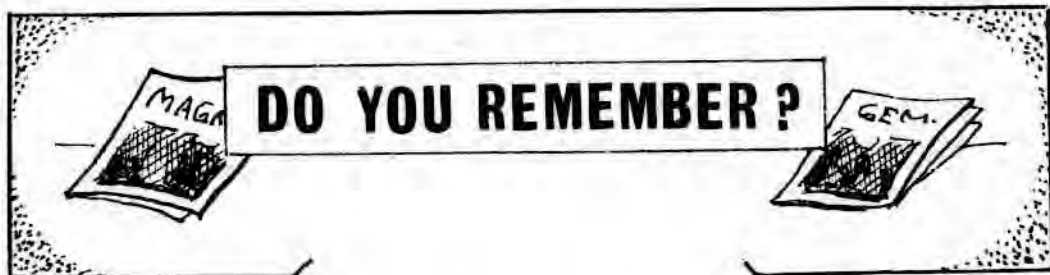
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WANTED: Sexton Blake Library No. 423 "The Missing Spy". Please write to ERIC FAYNE.



No. 203 - Gems 657-61 - Dirk Power Series

by Roger M. Jenkins

Gem 657 was entitled "The Shadow of the Past" but for once Talbot was not mentioned. Dirk Power was the shadow of the past, and Ernest Levison, after receiving a letter from his father telling him an old enemy, his ex-partner from Yukon days, had turned up, then in the same chapter opened the melodramatic telegram "He is coming. Fly." The whole of the first number was in fact devoted to the flight of the Levison brothers and their pursuit by Dirk Power who met them on Rylcombe station and had come to murder them. It was never explained how he knew who they were, and actually the whole story seems more than slightly unreal. Equally incredible was the first chapter in the next issue, when Levison phoned up from Rockhaven asking for some friends to join him on their trip because of the danger they were in, and the Head agreed to let them go, without any delay. How he would have answered to their parents is a mystery that was never touched upon.

The arrival of Levison minor and the gradual reform of Ernest Levison had occupied a good deal of space in the Gem in war-time days, but in 1920 the old paper was at a low ebb, with few genuine Hamiltonian stories. The Dirk Power series, therefore, should have stood out like a candle in the darkness but instead it cast only a very dim light. One disadvantage was the fact that the Gem carried two serials at this time, and the travels of the Levisons seemed to take place at breakneck speed. No. 658 saw their yacht being shelled at sea and their hotel set on fire at San Francisco, which they had reached via the Panama canal. No. 659 related their trip from Vancouver to the Yukon, searching for the Indian chief, Thunder Face, who would have proof that Mr. Levison had not betrayed his partner to the Indians all those years ago. Unfortunately, the chief was dead, and it was doubtful whether Dirk Power would have

believed the evidence in any case. It casts considerable doubt on the wisdom of Mr. Levison's journey, and of course they were pursued by Dirk Power all the way. The last two numbers saw them in Texas, also familiar ground to Mr. Levison, and here they had an ally in Texas Bill, his old acquaintance.

If the stories in this series showed a jerkiness in construction, and if Mr. Levison's weakness of character seemed extremely surprising in someone who had travelled and prospected so much, there was at least no fault that could be found with the description of the landscape, which showed that Charles Hamilton had always done his homework with the aid of the travel books he possessed in abundance. British Columbia, the scene of the Cedar Creek stories he was then currently writing for the Boys' Friend weekly, was most convincing. Equally so were the details of the Texas landscape, which was to come to full fruition a little later with the Rio Kid stories. It is more than a little curious that the author had time for such wide background reading but was too hurried in his writing to give the Dirk Power series the polish that the readers had come to expect as of right.

THE 'REMOVE' REMOVED

by Reg. Moss

An attempt at a plausible solution, and of the identification of the original Remove, the angry crowd, who faced Harry Wharton,

The first 115 issues of the Magnet record a total of 66 names as being members of the Remove. This excludes the temporary 'guests' of Hoffmann and Meunier. The 66 consist of 19 substantive characters (that is: the first of our generally accepted 39), together with Lacy, Elliott and Levison, and 44 random names otherwise unknown.

Magnet 116 (H.A. Hinton) is a problem. It introduces for the one occasion a further 12 names. For the present purpose these can be disregarded as an aberration, and our solution confined to the first 115 issues. The random names, and those non-substantive names which are highlighted in a particular story or mini series from 117 onward, are explained away at the end of this article.

For the solution it is necessary to make certain assumptions.

Firstly - that all Magnet stories covered only a little more than one and a half scholastic years. That is starting with the arrival of Harry Wharton. This would have been towards the latter part of the first half of the first scholastic year.

Secondly - that at the beginning of the Greyfriars saga the Upper Fourth and the Shell were small or recently depleted classes. We only have about a dozen names for each of these Forms.

Thirdly - that the substantive members of the Remove named in the first 45 Magnets are considered to have been there when Harry Wharton arrived, unless they were the subject of a specific arrival story, for example Bob Cherry.

The first scholastic year commenced with a roll of 43 consisting of 13 substantives, namely - Nugent, Bulstrode, Bunter, Russell, Skinner, Hazeldene, Trevor, Morgan, Desmond, Smith Minor, Stott, Ogilvy and Snoop. Also present were Lacy, Elliott, and 28 randoms. There is an age variation of at least two years. Some were a little young for the Remove, some a little old, with most of the latter among the random names.

These names were - Owen, Hughes, Glenn, King, Santley, Herring, Osborne, Jameson, Harris, Mills, Curtis, Jones, Turner, Saunders, Price, Carew, Benson, Fisher, Yates, Perkins, Grimes, Quinn, Lantham, Crouch, Rawlings, Johnson, Gaunt, and Barr.

During the first half of the first scholastic year, six 'random' names must have left, and the vacancies were filled by, Wharton, Cherry, Singh, Wun Lung, Linley and Levison.

At the half way mark for the year, the Remove were surveyed by Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch; and 19 older members of the remaining 22 'randoms' were considered ready for their removal to the Upper Fourth.

So at the beginning of the second half of the year, the roll consisted of 18 substantive members, together with Lacy, Elliott, and Levison, and the three randoms not removed - Jones, Price, and Benson. These three are mentioned again in the Magnet after issue 45, as still being in the Remove.

It was evidently decided to keep the roll as near as possible to 40, and so 16 new pupils in the higher age group were accepted and placed in the Remove. These were - O'Rourke, Clancy, Evans, McDonald, Groom, Kidd, Mukle, Berry, Eden, Kettle, Blundell, Bennett, Lyle, Higgs, Mayne, and Widlake.

During this period Levison was expelled, and the vacancy was filled by Tom Brown. This brings our substantives to 19.

At the end of this first scholastic year some of the older pupils - the 16 who entered mid-year, together with Jones, Price, and Benson, were removed to the Upper Fourth. A similar removal was also made from the Upper Fourth to the Shell. These latter forms were now at reasonable strength.

The Substantive characters - 13 originals and 6 newer arrivals had been placed in the Remove as being in advance of the Third Form but not necessarily up to full Remove standard. Also because of their somewhat younger average age they were to continue for

a further year as the nucleus of the next year's Remove Form.

This was the important year. The second scholastic year during which all of our 39 substantives would be assembled in the Remove. It is therefore necessary to make a further assumption, namely that all the remaining 20 arrived either at the beginning of the year, or at least during the early stages, even if their arrival stories only appeared years later. In the meantime the roll will stand at 41 because Lacy and Elliott still hover somewhere in the background.

The position now is that the 86 characters, that is - the 66 up to and including Magnet 115, and the later 20 substantives, have been deployed as follows -

The complete 'traditional' Remove	39
Lacy and Elliott	2
Levison - expelled	1
Departed (to make 6 vacancies)	6
Removed to Upper Fourth	38
	86

It is interesting to note the names of Price and Blundell. They could not have been our Price and Blundell. But Harris and Grimes are a different matter. They are again mentioned in Magnet 160 as members of the Upper Fourth. So here is the basis for my plausible solution.

It would appear then that the angry, bullying crowd who faced Harry Wharton must have been our original 13 substantives, 27 of the 28 original 'randoms' and Lacy and Elliott. In fact the original Remove.

But what of the Remove names which appear after Magnet 115 - ignoring 116. The probable answer is that the Leighs, Carltons, and Keens, and all the others who appeared over the years as new members of the Remove, were placed there initially. With an age spread of about two years they were placed under the eagle eye of Mr. Quelch for the purpose of a final scholastic assessment. After a short period their actual Form status was confirmed. Some went into the Third, some into the Upper Fourth, some remained in the Remove. That is until their short stay at Greyfriars terminated. Whether they left quietly and unsung, as heroes or in disgrace, they all added to the extraordinary annals of Greyfriars.

With such a system how did Bunter and some of the others manage to get into the Remove? How did they remain? The answer seems to be that there is little in these early days of Greyfriars to suggest that even Bunter, Presumably 43rd. in Form out of 43 is not at least up to an acceptable minimum standard. The later Bunter had not yet been developed.



NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

MIDLAND

A good attendance of 12 members turned up at our March meeting, and we were very happy, though we missed Tom Porter and Christine Brettall who are recovering from illness.

We opened the meeting, standing in silence for one minute's tribute to our member, John Look, who died recently.

The question of finance was discussed, and Joan Golen made a magnificent donation of £20 to the club. We have many generous members or we should never be able to carry on, costs being what they are.

The refreshments supplied by Joan Golen, Joan Loveday, and Betty and Johnny Hopton were, as usual, a feast for the gods.

An ingenious quiz, based on the alphabet, was presented by Vin Loveday, and was won by Keith Normington who received a small prize. Ivan Webster gave an amusing Greyfriars reading in which Skinner placed an advertisement in a local paper to inform readers that Mr. Quelch was seeking a wife.

There followed another quiz, from your Correspondent, on general O.B.B.C. topics. Nobody knew that Turkey Tuck's real name was James Smythe Tuck. Patricia Fahey was the winner, and got a Howard Baker reprint of Magnet No. 58. Ivan also got 14 right, but gallantly gave the prize to the lady.

Our next meeting will be on May 28th. We wish all O.B.B.C. members all the best everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

CAMBRIDGE

A meeting of the Cambridge Club took place on Sunday, 31st March, 1985, commencing at 3.00 p.m. Following the business side of the meeting, Bill Lofts gave a talk on 'Astonishing Coincidences'

that have left him feeling that perhaps strange inexplicable forces were at work. Keith Hodgkinson then gave a talk on science fiction novels that had found their way onto the cinema screen, and examples were shown from H.G. Wells' "Things to Come". Philip Wylie & Edwin Balmer's "When Worlds Collide," H.G. Wells' "War of the Worlds", and many others. He then went onto radio and T.V. plays in this genre which had later been made into films and examples were shown from Charles Eric Maine's "Spaceways", Nigel Kneales, "The Quatermass Experiment" and "Quatermass and the Pit", before the whole event came to a close at 6.30 p.m. with the ultimate trip in Arthur C. Clarke's "2001-A Space Odyssey". Needless to say the show took place at Keith's house in Willingham, otherwise this presentation might have been fraught with difficulties.

K.H.

LONDON

There was a good attendance at the Bisley meeting and those enjoyed the excellent hospitality of the hosts, Roy and Gwen Parsons and a very good programme that had been arranged.

Roger Jenkins commenced the proceedings with one of his grid puzzles and Mark Jarvis was an easy winner with four correct answers.

Maurice Hall who had brought along Alan Capel of Ontario, Canada, gave a talk on the illustrators. It was agreed that the stories would have been less attractive without the drawings. A discussion took place in which Cyril Rowe, Roger Jenkins and Leslie Rowley were amongst some who expressed their views on this subject.

Millicent Lyle spoke of how she had written a script for one of the radio shows of the late Arthur Askey.

Leslie Rowley was the winner of Roy Parsons' Magnet quotations competition and followed this up with the reading of two more chapters of his own version as to how "The Shadow of the Sack" may have continued.

The Memory Lane reading by Bill Bradford was taken for newsletter 206, circa 1970. This was about the Christmas meeting that Bob and Louie Blythe hosted.

No Hamilton Library transactions in May and June. Brian Simmonds proposed the vote of thanks to the Hosts.

Next meeting at the Loughton home of Chris and Suzanne Harper on Sunday, 12th May when a full tea will be provided. Kindly advise if attending.

Ben Whiter.

NORTHERN O.B.B.C. REPORT

Meeting held: Saturday, 13th April, 1985.

We had ten members present for our A.G.M. Harry Barlow said he did not wish to stand again for Chairman, and it was proposed that Keith Smith take the Chair for the coming year's session. Our Secretary remains as Revd. Geoffrey Good and our Treasurer and Librarian will be Mollie Allinson. Harry was thanked for his period as Chairman and for the lively and witty comments he brought to our meetings. We shall never forget his inimitable "opening remarks" of each session!

A number of new books were on display: JANE AND CO. to be published at the end of April which would please the fans of Evadne Price. Macmillan had produced facsimile first editions of ALICE IN WONDERLAND and THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS - most attractive books with gilt edges and in a slip-case. Collins had reprinted four of Noel Streatfield's children's novels to coincide with the publication of her biography - which was also brought for inspection. Robert Leeson was the author of READING AND RIGHTING which dealt with the aspects of children's writing over the past years and in the future. The author comments on the works of Frank Richards and it was pleasing to note that he made some favourable remarks.

For "My Choice", Jack Allison brought along a copy of THE PATH TO ROME by Hilaire Belloc: Jack had first bought the book when on the station platform at Blackpool, in the war years. Jack had been told many years ago, that one should turn to page 100 on picking up a book in a bookshop or library and reading just that one page. If the page riveted one's attention, then the book was good enough to obtain. To prove his point, he read page 100. The story - a true one - was concerning the author's visit to Rome using wherever possible a "straight line" through Europe. A fascinating piece of literature.

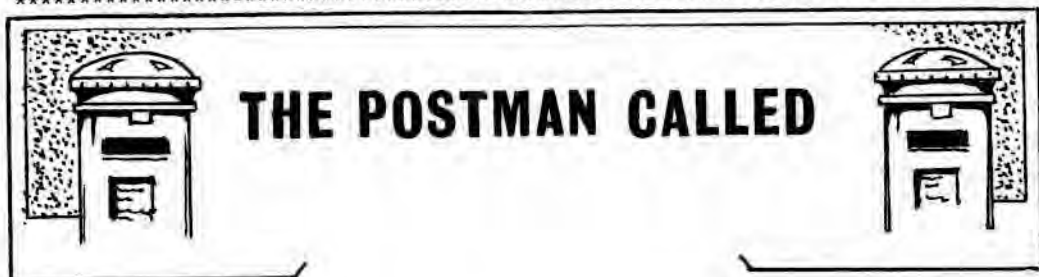
Geoffrey Good read a very amusing piece from Chapter 2 of Magnet 1434 where Alonzo Todd insists on ringing up Mr. Quelch in his study. The conversations between the two characters are amusing and well-depicted by Frank Richards. Alonzo Todd was an improbable character and even incredible - but Frank Richards had the ingenious method of making such people credible and without them, we would not have had some of the marvellous stories.

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.



GEOFFREY CRANG (Buxton) Well done Mrs. Rowe, who traced the quotation. It had defeated me. I have some lines from that poem, but not relevant ones. I've also thought Felicia Hemans remains an underrated poetess, particularly having regard to the age she lived in and her not too happy private life. She left an indelible mark with her writings.

Inflation to me means that two "Daily Telegraphs" (2 x 23p) now cost more than a year's Magnets or Gems. (8s. 8d. in real money).

JOHN BRIDGWATER (Christchurch) I have just had a month in the sun of Southern Spain. To help pass the time I took the latest C.D. Annual, plus "The Courtfield Cracksman" Howard Baker volume, plus a handful of Sexton Blake Libraries. The Annual really is a "cracker" this year. I was very interested to read the early Mr. Buddle stories and also Chris Lowder's article on the Gwyn Evans hardbacks. With the Annual and the "Courtfield Cracksman" I had my Christmas all over again, and this time in the sun.

As a Sexton Blake devotee I found the Courtfield story slow and wandering away from the point most of the time as a detective story. Then I realised it was not a detective story but a school story, and the criminal happenings were viewed from the Greyfriars schoolboys' point of view. Once I had realised that, I found all the meanderings thoroughly enjoyable and the series ceased to seem of inordinate length

and became ideal holiday reading.

Mrs. BETTE COLBY (Chatswood, Australia) I echo your sentiments in the introduction to the Annual. Truly it does seem quite unbelievable that 38 years have gone by since the first edition was published - and each passing year has added lustre to the C.D. and to its Annual. What a different world we shared in those early days when life seemed comparatively simple and uncomplicated. One does mourn old times, and the passing of our loved ones, but at least there is still cause for rejoicing that the C.D. and the Annual have gone from strength to strength.

Vic and I were quite spooked when we read the Blake feature by Jack Adrian. This was because, earlier in the same week, we had been chatting on the same subject. Vic could remember one hard cover story where a careless proof-reader had missed the fact that the chief character's name had been changed and there was a reference to "Blake" who had never appeared in the story. In one way, I suppose one could not blame the authors for trying to add to their incomes by this method.

W.T. THURBON (Cambridge) I was very glad to see the cover of the March Digest - the first issue of the Penny Marvel. Lovely!

JAMES THOMPSON (Birkenhead) May I relate to you how I first became a reader of the Companion Papers. In early 1917 I was in the school playground reading a comic when a boy came up to me and thrust a battered copy of the Gem into my hands. He said: "Read this. You'll enjoy it more than that so-and-so comic." Ever since then I have been an addict. Soon afterwards I was in the local market and saw on a second-hand bookstall a pile of mint Green Gems. The first time I had ever seen a Green one. The proprietor said: "I don't think you will have read any of those, sonny. They were published before you were born. They're a penny each, if you're interested."

Not strictly true, because I was 10 at the time and it was 1917. I only had twopence, so I selected two. One of them was "The Stow-away of St. Jim's". Soon after that, when I was with my mother, I saw a pile of Red Magnets in a second-hand shop - the first time I had ever seen a Red Magnet, and I was thrilled. My Mother grudgingly gave me a penny, so I was only able to buy one of these. I treasured that Red Magnet for years along with the Gems, and I always regard that time as one of the outstanding periods of my life.

HAROLD TRUSCOTT (Deal) I found James Hodge's article "The Famous Five - Heroes or Hooligans?" very interesting indeed - and not merely because he quoted me and, from a safe distance in time and space, accepted my premise. But that premise, of course, had nothing to

do with "shipping" studies, and wrecking private property. Maybe Hamilton was only reflecting what did actually happen at public schools - even by the "better" boys. I do not know; I have never had anything to do with such schools. Neither had he, personally, but he must have got the idea from somewhere. But I agree with Mr. Hodge. I have never been comfortable about this aspect of Hamilton's stories. I hate any kind of destruction - of other people's property, or, still more, the destruction of people, mentally and physically, of which there has been altogether too much in this century alone.

On the other hand, to make what case one can for the Famous Five in such instances - and others of the "decent" boys - what can you do when faced with characters such as Hilton, and, especially, Price, Loder, Carberry, Carne, etc.? Nonetheless, I doubt whether this was the way to do it. In the Magnet, or the Gem, such treatment only seemed to make them worse than ever, and to bring the "decent" boys, for a time, down to their level.

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon) A thought provoking issue of the DIGEST. I see that Charles Hamilton is under fire again for apparently condoning "hooliganism, in this case the "stripping of Hilton's study by the Famous Five in the 1927 "Game Kid" series. I agree that such aggressive behaviour should not be tolerated in real life, but, to be fair to Hamilton, neither is it at Greyfriars. As he himself writes, the "stripping" was "fairly certain to earn the Remove party a flogging all round if Hilton laid a complaint before his Form master". Of course Hilton won't, since he has been "using" the "Game Kid" for his own ends, getting him into trouble, and earning him a flogging.

It is, infact, retribution visited upon Hilton for leading Dury astray. It is not a mere penchant for juvenile horseplay on Hamilton's part - and certainly not a liking for violence - but a moral attitude, best expressed by the much quoted phrase: "The way of the transgressor is hard." In other words, each of us is responsible for his own actions, and in this hard world if we wrong others, we are likely to experience retribution sooner or later' Perhaps he thought that the Study-wrecking would be more likely to appeal to a schoolboy's sense of rough justice

than any amount of sermonising. At least, in Hamilton's day, such vandalism would, in real life, almost certainly be punished, whereas, to-day, there is always some politician, television journalist or leader writer to plead the extenuating circumstance of social deprivation, or unemployment, or some other irrelevant reason for excusing anti-social behaviour in youngsters.

"SPOOFING THE SCHOOL"

Frank Richards.

(Howard Baker Book Club Special: £18.)

In this superb volume we have six Magnets from the summer of 1912. Most of the stories are decidedly unusual. Often, in fact, quite unbelievable, and chock-full of charm. And the Bunter appearance are down to a bare minimum, which is really no disadvantage.

"The Circus Schoolboy" is written rather too facetiously. The trend is shown in the first chapter when the Famous Four are portrayed as trying to behave like good little boys. One might think, the author tells us in a grinding effort at humour, that they had been reading "encouraging literature like 'Derrick, or Piece by Piece.'"

In this story we meet a new boy, Arthur Banthorpe. Rummy how new boys turned up at Greyfriars, higgledy-piggledy, in the middle of terms. Banthorpe is a timid boy who does not want to go to Greyfriars. So, by a bit of contrivance, his place is taken by Nobby Nobbs, an exceptionally strong boy from a circus. The strong boy gives himself away at the finish in a rescue sequence which, later on, was to feature in the famous Gem story "A Strange Secret" - the first of the white cover Gems.

After all, the real Banthorpe comes to Greyfriars - he played small parts in stories for a while in red covers days - and the boys are kind to him, in memory of the boy from the circus.

Banthorpe has a part in the next tale "Under Suspicion" - a fairly famous red Magnet in its day. Mr. Capper, who is an expert philatelist, has a valuable stamp stolen. The new Jewish boy, Newland, is under suspicion. There is another new boy, Armitage, who turns out to be Dixon Hawke, the boy detective. (I remember that somewhere or other there was a series concerning Dixon Hawke.) Gadsby is exposed as the thief who took the stamp, and he is expelled. (No relation, presumably, to Gadsby of Highcliffe. Just a recurrence of names.)

"Harry Wharton & Co's Bank Holiday" is really a lot of delicious nonsense, and a dream of delight. Lord Maulever has a party at Mauleverer Hall (is it the same place later promoted to Mauleverer Towers?) and he takes his party to Blackpool for an old-fashioned August bank holiday, travelling third class by excursion train. This is the famous yarn where they find Monsieur Charpentier, short of money, in a seaside concert party on the sands, singing "Ze day I come to London, Ze fog was in ze sky, a pretty girl she look at me, and vink ze ozzer eye."

And it's a tale that takes a lot of swallowing-but so digestible. Next comes a pleasant romp, "Spoofing the School", with Frank Nugent in the unlikely role of a fake palmist, out to "spooof the school".

Then "The Kidnapped School" with a sinister Spanish captain kidnapping Greyfriars to provide labourers to dig for a treasure he is seeking. Quite fantastic, typical of the Red Magnet era, and real nostalgic-type reading. Finally "The Competition Craze at Greyfriars", with Fishy cashing in on the public taste for picturepuzzle competitions. Fish is out to make money, which as usual eludes him at the end.

A glorious lot of unbelievable yarns, to give a happy summer, and to last for ever. And the whole lot bound in the impeccable quality and style of these magnificent "Specials" from Howard Baker. "Quite luvverly!" as the dustman in Pygmalion might have summed up.

JANE AND CO. - by Evadne Price (stories selected by Mary Cadogan)
201 pages, hardback with dust jacket. Macmillan
£6.95

Up to now, only the privileged few have been able to read the JANE stories by Evadne Price - simply because the stories have been out of print for 35 years. Those that have been fortunate enough to find the odd book (there were ten books in the Jane series) have invariably endeavoured to obtain more.)

Jane is a born leader amongst men. Her chums, Pug and Chaw feature in many of the stories and Amelia Tweeddale the Vicar's daughter adds plenty of colour as the "perfect little child". The curly-haired hater of dolls and lover of boys' games Jane, usually manages to get one over on Amelia who certainly does not fit into Jane's gang of boys.

Mary has selected twelve stories from seven of the Jane books. JANE AND CO. is not a reprint as such so it may not be of help to the collector who is trying to locate the elusive title or so. It certainly is of immense help to enable many people to be introduced to the lovable Jane and her antics. Those who love Richmal Crompton's William are almost certain to revel in the attractive of Jane.

Macmillan must be congratulated on taking the plunge in reprinting some of the Jane stories in this form with the intention of reaching the children's market with good quality humorous writing in this world of computers and ready-made entertainment that children so like these days. This book is not just for children by far - Evadne Price's writing is so subtle that it would need a mature adult mind to realise what she is getting at. This book is well worth £6.95. Let us hope that more books will be published in this series. Further good news - Frank R. Grey's original illustrations are used.

DARRELL SWIFT

FOR SALE: Newly and beautifully bound copy of Frank Richards' only full-length post-war western "THE LONE TEXAN." Good original paperback copy; binding in red with title in heavy old lettering on front cover and on spine. Postage extra.
Write ERIC FAYNE. (No reply if item already sold.)

FOR SALE: Duplicate "NELSON LEE's", O/S and N/S. "Union Jack's" (some early numbers). Various other O.B.B.s.
Thomson Publications 1960 - 1970 c: e.g. "HOTSPUR" "ROVER" "WIZARD" Etc. Also few annuals. Stamp please for details.
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Lose Ox Chart

or

anagrammatically speaking

EXTRA SCHOOL

from: Ernest Holman

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. A FLIGHTED SKIN SON | 19. MUMS RARER HEIGHTS JEAN |
| 2. A RARER FEB BRAND | 20. NOR YACHT PROM |
| 3. A SPY REPORT | 21. OH CHILD CUBE TIME |
| 4. AN PEP GLASS | 22. ONLY I HAD LONDON WAY
HORROR WATCH |
| 5. AIRY FENCE | 23. OVERTHEME |
| 6. ANY HAUL IN LOAD | 24. QUELCH SEERS |
| 7. BR RESOLVE COPY | 25. RARE PICKER |
| 8. CID DOT LANKY | 26. REG LOST C CODE LIST |
| 9. GATHER | 27. SWORE BY RAKED SOLES |
| 10. GIRL AND A BOTTLE | 28. THYMER WON LOT |
| 11. GREAT LIN | 29. TITLE HERE HERBERT |
| 12. HAD LINED LOSERS | 30. TO QUIET MESH FAME |
| 13. HEN DOUBTER | 31. TOGS FLOW |
| 14. I HIKED TOR | 32. TURN BY LIBEL |
| 15. I CRASH FOR ROSY LEG | 33. U CAME IN WORD |
| 16. I SEE RACE THRILLS | 34. WE FLY REAL MAN |
| 17. LINNET GIVEN TO
NORMAN | 35. WERE RUM ALE VOTERS |
| 18. LOW HOT GARDEN | |

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The foregoing Anagrams comprise:

4 Separate Characters from Greyfriars	3 Publications
2 " " " Rookwood	2 Artists
2 " " " St. Jim's	2 Authors
1 Group of characters " St. Jim's	2 Editors
1 Character " Carcroft	2 Homes
1 " " Cliff House	1 Area
1 " " St. Frank's	1 Establishment
1 " " Sexton Blake	1 Form
1 " " Modern Boy	1 Literary Detective
1 " " The Popular	1 Room

and

- 3 Gwyn Evans' Contributions to Union Jack i.e. 2 Serials (Late '20s and Early '30s)
1 Christmas SB Story (Late '20s)
- 1 Greyfriars Story from Magnet (late '20s)

(Solution next month)