AUGUST 1993

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VOL. 47

No. 560

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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FURTHER THOUGHTS ON ST. FRANK'S

I have received several more letters on the suggestion that the Nelson Lee Column should be extended to cover E.S. Brooks' other works and, as before, most correspondents are in favour of this. However there is still much concern that articles on the Nelson Lee and St. Frank's should not be squeezed out by features on Brooks' adult 'durable desperadoes' etc. There is a strong feeling that any new title chosen for the Brooks' pages should include the Nelson Lee's name. I suggest, therefore, that from next month we should call this feature *NELSON LEE - AND ESB*. As Ian Godden from Australia points out, 'Brooks is often referred to as ESB'. He adds that there is plenty of material by this author to inspire articles: 'In addition to Nelson Lee there are the hardcover books on Gunn and Grey, the stories in Union Jack, Thriller and Detective Weekly, the Sexton Blakes, the school stories as Reginald Brown and much more...'.

Mr. Edward Allatt of Cowley writes to remind us that the Nelson Lee has been a pillar of the C.D. for so long that it must never be neglected: '...nostalgia is the key word. I for one will be most sorry if the new title does not have Nelson Lee or St. Frank's in it.' He also suggests that reproduction

in the C.D. of more Nelson Lee covers and pictures would be welcome. My problem here is that I possess only a very few Lees - so, if more pictures are wanted, I have to ask readers to send me copies of these.

COLLECTORS' NOTES

Several newer readers have written to endorse requests for regular features which give 'basic information' about our hobby even though this may seem 'fairly old hat to long-standing readers'. Perhaps potential contributors would bear this request in mind. I would be willing to start a DO YOU KNOW? Collectors' Notes feature if readers would contribute a regular flow of material for this.

Happy Holiday Reading!

MARY CADOGAN

* *

A STUDY FEED

by Eric Fayne

The other Monday a few of my pals in the Old Boys' Book Club came along to my place in uncharted Hampshire for a good old natter and a study feed. And pals from the O.B.B.C. are the finest pals in the whole wide world. As if you didn't know that already!

In the course of our hobby gossip, Bill (we'll call him that for short) mentioned that just recently he had a very lucky find in the shape of a Boys' Friend Library of long ago, containing that fine story "The School Under Canvas" by Prosper Howard, which was yet another pen-name of Charles Hamilton. Bill acquired this copy from a second-hand bookstall. A big bargain.

Over our buns and tarts we debated the date of that copy. The B.F.L.'s were not dated, so, like Sexton Blake, we could only look for evidence. There is but little doubt that "School Under Canvas", a story of Rylcombe Grammar School (near St. Jim's) was originally intended for the Empire Library. The Empire had been the birthplace and permanent home for the Rylcombe tales of Prosper Howard.

But the Empire Library packed up very suddenly, after a short life, in the Spring of 1911. And "School Under Canvas" was transferred to the Gem, where it ran as a serial for several months in 1912. (It was in good company, for, in 1912, the Gem was coming up every week with St. Jim's stories which rank among the finest school tales ever written.)

So "School Under Canvas", in book form in the B.F.L., probably appeared in 1913. It is a delightful book with no sign of the story having been compressed into limited space. No sign at all of any paper shortage, so one can assume that it was before the war. And we plumped for 1913.

And then somehow we became aware that at the back of the study where we were lounging were bookcases, crammed full with many hundreds of copies of the various "Libraries", all superbly bound. And, of course, "School Under Canvas", bound singly, was among them.

We had some of them out and browsed over them. I am probably telling you something which you already know, but those "Libraries", when bound, make truly beautiful volumes on your shelves, as well as being kept in pristine condition for ever.

That Monday, after my O.B.B.C. pals had gone on their way, I sat down for a long think. I went back to a bookcase and yanked out another B.F.L.

What is very evident in the years before the First World War is the fact that St. Jim's was well ahead of Greyfriars in the popularity stakes in those days. As well as featuring in the Gem we find specially-written tales of Tom Merry in the B.F.L., plus reprints in the Penny Popular.

Now for that little bound volume I had yanked out of a bookcase. This was a very long, specially-written, story of St. Jim's. It was entitled "The Silent Three". But Charles Hamilton did not write it. It was what we call today a "sub" story. It is No. 153 of the B.F.L. It is undated, as were all the Libraries at that time, but we can understudy Sexton Blake and arrive at the date.

On the inside front cover is a mouth-watering list of the unsurpassed papers for boys, in the shops at that time. The Magnet was published every Tuesday; The Gem every Thursday. So it was very early on.

And on the inside back cover is an invitation to see the Coronation of King George the Fifth as a special prize offered in the Boys' Herald. The Coronation was in 1911. So "The Silent Three" was in the shops in the early Spring of 1911.

Although it is a "sub" story it is nevertheless a real "collectors' item". It is noteworthy as being the first *long* sub yarn specially written for the B.F.L. Furthermore, it is the only instance I know of a story, centred on a Hamilton school, yet not published under one of the Hamilton pen-names. It appeared anonymously. Just for once the publishers did not try to lead readers up the garden path and pretend that Martin Clifford wrote it.

Also, it is very rare. So far as I know it was never reprinted. I have never seen it mentioned in any article on our hobby, and, apart from this copy in my own bookcase, I have never seen another one.

Earlier, Hamilton had specially written two long stories for the Boys' Friend Library. They had been titled respectively "Tom Merry & Co." and "Tom Merry's Conquest." (Later on each of these long yarns was reprinted as two stories each, in the Gem.)

So why was Hamilton not asked to write the third extra-long story for the B.F.L.? Almost certainly he *was* asked. But he was working harder at that time than in any period of his life. He had earlier written the two long stories of St. Jim's previously referred to. But now, in 1911, he was writing every week a St. Jim's story for the Gem, a Greyfriars story for the Magnet, a Rylcombe Grammar School story for the Empire Library, plus full-length stories of other schools to run as serials in various papers. He just had not the time for anything else just then, as I see it.

So, because the publishers wanted to meet the demand for Tom Merry, a sub writer was put on to this one. "The Silent Three" was the result.

I have now read the story, possibly for the first time, and I cannot link the style with any of the later "subs". Whoever he was, he had a mildly irritating habit of giving long, long passages of dialogue with little indication of who was speaking. I only knew D'Arcy on account of his lisp.

I tried to read it without prejudice to see whether it might be a good school story if the familiar Hamilton characters were replaced with others. It would take a big stretch of imagination to class it "a good story". There is no plot. It is a thing of bits and pieces, linked by dialogue.

At the start Mr. Ratcliff comes on the Terrible Three and Figgins & Co. having an argument. Mr. R. gives an order that none of the six boys concerned shall speak to one

another for a week. Hence the title "The Silent Three". As the two trios were in different Houses and in different forms one would have thought that the non-speaking edict would not bother them. But it did. They visit one another to express their thoughts in mime, which is invariably misunderstood.

For no apparent reason, Mr. Railton is away from the school, his locum being a Mr. Brown. Then a new boy arrives, unlikely in the middle of term. His name is Billy Barnes. He has saved a relative of D'Arcy's from being run over by a bus, so, to reward Billy, Mr. Robert D'Arcy sends Billy as a pupil to St. Jim's. Gussy cannot place Mr. Robert D'Arcy among his known relatives (and neither can we).

So Billy comes to St. Jim's. Most unlikely, as Billy Barnes is a cockney lad who drops his aitches and speaks in a weird and wonderful manner. (Probably the writer had in mind the recent Joe Frayne stories in the Gem. But Joe Frayne, though he could not have been accepted at St. Jim's in real life, was the centre of beautiful written stories so we sat back and enjoyed them.)

A young man named Kemp, living locally, challenges Tom Merry and his pals to a boat race with Kemp's local friends, so a chapter or two go to describing the boat race.

Gussy takes Billy Barnes under his wing, and decides his attire is unworthy. So Gussy, who has masses of splendid clothes, provides Billy with some. He also provides him with an eyeglass, ignoring the fact that a monocle was not a decoration but an aid to one eye where the sight is faulty. Actually, it is inconceivable that any boy would be allowed to wear an eyeglass in any school. But Gussy always got away with it, and we ignored the improbability down the years and loved the tales.

Kemp now challenges St. Jim's juniors to a cricket match, filling another chapter or two. Finally, Mr. Robert D'Arcy arrives at the school. He is a very old man, and he and Gussy become acquainted. Mr. D'Arcy decides to take Billy away from St. Jim's and let him become a resident in a D'Arcy home as an adopted son.

And that was that. Pretty grim, perhaps, yet I value that early, very rare, copy in my bookcase.

Finally, an interesting point is that in the case of the first two genuine St. Jim's tales in the B.F.L., the usual practice was reversed. They appeared first in the Library and later were reprinted in the Gem. Later on the Libraries were made up of reprints from the Gem, Magnet, Boy's Friend. Maybe much the better way.

I have no recollection that "The Silent Three" was reprinted in the Gem or anywhere else. Which is, perhaps, hardly surprising.

An intriguing teaser! Who, would you think, was the artist who drew the cover picture to "The Silent Three"? It certainly wasn't Macdonald, Chapman, or Shields. Could it possibly have been a young Warwick Reynolds?

* *

THE STRANGE CASE OF THE B.B.C. HYBRID

by Alan Pratt

Like roast beef. Sexton Blake has frequently been referred to as a "great British institution."

To those of us in the Hobby this seems, at once, a fitting tribute.

Of course, Blake is an institution. How could he be otherwise, having featured in (literally) countless adventures over the best part of a century, appealing to readers of at least three generations and possibly more.

Yet how does the description stand up to a more detailed analysis? For, unlike the aforementioned Sunday joint, Blake does not have one lasting flavour; he does, in fact, change constantly to reflect the passing of time, shifting opinion and, most importantly perhaps, public taste. It is hard to see any real similarity between the precisely spoken hero of the early UJ and the jet-setting business man operating from Berkeley Square in the early Sixties. Between these two there were many shades of the Great Detective and, where time alone failed to produce variation, this was achieved through the simple fact that the stories came from many different authors of very differing capabilities.

Inevitably Blake must be considered as something of an enigma and the team commissioned to produce a series of adventures for BBC radio in the late Sixties were faced with quite a challenge. Clearly they were required to come up with a product that was sufficiently modern to appeal to a new breed of "liberated" listeners yet traditional enough to satisfy those who remembered The Detective Weekly with affection.

Inevitably, and in the true spirit of British compromise, a hybrid was created. A "traditional" author, Donald Stuart, was chosen and the plots were, in the main, thrillerish and of the Old School. But Blake was operating from Berkeley Square and was supported not only by Tinker but also secretary Paula Dane.

Storylines were old (and had in fact, been used previously) but some of the titles were bang up to date. "You Must be Joking" and "No Trees for the Peke" gave little clue to the style of the plays, and listeners expecting racy Hadley Chase type shenanigans were likely to be disappointed.

Listening to the programmes now (courtesy of the London OBBC Sexton Blake Library from whom tapes are available) it is amusing to note the various "topical" references. Tinker is frequently being taken to task for ogling girls in miniskirts ("Gosh... did you see that one Guv'nor?") and clues are picked up at "discotheques" rather than night clubs. In one episode a Chinese disco owner (sounding very much like a refugee from The Goon Show) tells Blake not to interfere in things beyond his understanding to a background of The Rolling Stones recording of "Route 66".

William Franklyn ambles through the series as Blake sounding (I hate to say it) just a wee bit smug at times and David Gregory is his eager and enthusiastic Tinker, hovering uncertainly somewhere between man and boy.

Heather Chasen, she of "Navy Lark" fame, is Paula but not the sexy young lady of the SBL, more a sort of "bimbo" much given to saying silly girlie things and eating large quantities of everything going.

Of course the whole lot is wrapped up with the kind of professionalism one expects from the BBC and the finished product is far from bad. It is certainly interesting and well worth a listen in these days when Blake is no more outside the circle of the Hobby.

Which brings me full circle. We, a minority, are keeping a British institution alive. Had Blake been a creation from across the water where popular fiction is afforded so much more reverence, he would almost certainly have been a subject for a University degree course.

Or can some of our readers claim a Doctorate in Blakiana?

* *

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* *

THOUGHTS ON HOLIDAYS

by C. Churchill

Reading the remarks of our esteemed editor in the June C.D. about holiday series in the old papers caused me to turn to my list of Nelson Lee titles and pick out a few adventures of the St. Frank's holidayites that I consider above the average. As our old friend the late Bill Lister once said: "I have travelled the world, to Africa, Australia, America, China and goodness knows where else all by sitting in my sitting room and reading the Nelson Lee stories penned by Edwy Searles Brooks."

My personal opinion is that the White Giants series of June/Sept. 1920 stands supreme in the N.L.L. The stories were in Nos. 264/274 old small series. The following year we had the series about Roaring Z Ranch, the home of Farman of the Remove. This took us to Montana and then a journey up the Ghost river to northern Canada. Very exciting adventures here I must say.

We afterwards had several "coral island" series. I fancy the one in 1922 the best. It started in No. 366 and the first story was "The Schoolboy Crusoes". In this we had an excellent description of a journey through the

Suez canal. I imagine E.S.B. must have been there to be able to describe such a thing so well. In later stories we had descriptions of typhoons, tidal waves and other perils of the sea. Very vivid.

Other years we had stories of adventures in the deserts of Africa and tours in Australia, etc. The menu was always so large and as mentioned above very instructive. In the new series one year the party went to Kutanaland, the home of Umlosi who was the Chief of his country. Very interesting this was.

Some readers think that the Northestra stories in the early new series were first rate. We are all entitled to our own opinions, of course, but for myself I preferred the early St. Frank's stories written in the first person, ostensibly by Nipper. Our late friend, Bob Blythe, did not agree with me. He said that having Nipper to "relate" the events made him appear to be a "Big Head" and know-all. I could not concur with this so we agreed to differ.

I read most of the holiday adventures in the N.L.L. over the years but still like the White Giants series best of all.

As regards holiday adventures in other books I cannot recall ever reading any. The only ones I read of schools in other countries were those of Cedar Creek by Charles Hamilton. These were not, of course, holiday stories but I was always very fond of them. It was very clever of him to write these as I understand he never visited Canada. They seemed so real.

* *

THE SMITHS; SUREFOOT, SOCRATES & T.B.

by Ian Godden

We meet Chief Inspector Surefoot Smith in the Edgar Wallace novel THE CLUE OF THE SILVER KEY. Wallace explains how Smith came by his odd name; "That he was called Surefoot was no testimony to his gifts as a sleuth. It was his baptismal name. His father was a bookmaking publican, and a month before his child was born the late Mr. Smith, obsessed with the conviction that Surefoot, the Derby favourite, would not win, had laid that horse to win himself a fortune. If Surefoot had won, the late Mr. Smith would have been a ruined man. Surefoot lost, and in gratitude he named his infant child after the equine unfortunate."

Surefoot Smith is described as a "...slow, ponderous, unintelligent-looking man", who, "...was a great drinker of beer (and) had been known to polish off twenty bottles at a sitting without being any the worse for it, claiming, indeed, that beer intensified his powers of reasoning." Small wonder he was slow and ponderous after a skinful like

that. His head seems clear enough though; "Surefoot Smith was one of the few people in the world who have minds like a well-organised card index."

Surefoot could be found wandering about the city at all hours of the day and night rather like poor, old Elk. When he wants to do some solid thinking he paces the street between the Yard and Blackfriars; this stretch has thus become known as the 'Boulevard Of Cogitation'.

Another oddly-named Smith can be found in Wallace's THE THREE OAK MYSTERY which features Socrates Smith. "Socrates Smith had long forgiven his parents for his eccentric name. His father had been a wealthy iron-founder with a taste for the classics and it had only been the strenuous opposition of their mother which had prevented Lex from being named 'Aristophanes'".

Lexington Smith is 25 and Socrates is 50, but despite this astonishing gap in age the two brothers work well together. The verbal repartee and general jollification between them is most entertaining although Lex spoils things by falling in love, a thing which Socrates has never done.

Socrates is a former policeman who retired, on a private income of six thousand a year, to study criminology and anthropology, and is an expert on bloodstains and fingerprints so is often called in to help by the police.

T.B. Smith of Scotland Yard appeared in some early Wallace books such as THE NINE BEARS (with Elk, KATE PLUS TEN and THE SECRET HOUSE) but he was only a name for we are told next to nothing about him. Apparently, Wallace's considerable talent for characterisation had not ben developed at this early stage.

* *

BABS AND CO'S HOLIDAY EXPEDITION

by Margery Woods

Chapter 2

Never had Babs sprinted so fast, praying that her judgement was accurate and that she would be in time to deflect the child from the water's edge. The boy and girl had heard the screams and had turned, then started to run, but they were too far away to overtake the child and prevent its headlong plunge into the lake.

Babs heart was pounding. She almost threw herself the last few yards, and with a desperate lunge caught at the handlebar of the cycle. She, the child and the bike collapsed in a tangled heap on the pebbles, half in, half out of the water. The dog leapt around frantically while Babs struggled to her knees, disentangling herself and gathering up the crying child. The little girl was only a mite, no more than five, and should never have been left unsupervised with the expensive bike now unheeded in the water. Babs held the child close, soothing her, until the girl and boy pounded down the slope with guilty expressions.

"I say --- thanks," the young man said breathlessly. "What a good job you were there."

"I think she's all right," said Babs, "just frightened."

Guilt had already vanished from the girl's face. She was blonde, very pretty, and looked about seventeen. She gathered up the bike, seeming more concerned about damage to it rather than the child. She said sharply: "You re naughty, Emma, you know you're not supposed to touch Tammy's things. Don't you dare do that again."

Babs was moving away, her expression troubled, and the girl said quickly: 'I'm sorry --- I haven't thanked you for rescuing our pickle."

"It's all right," Babs shook her head, "no thanks needed."

The girl hesitated then stretched out one hand in appeal. "You won't say anything to anybody about this, please."

Babs looked puzzled. "I don't know anyone concerned with you. Why should I?"

"You see --- I could lose my job. I -- Oh no!" The girls stopped, giving a glance of dismay over Babs' shoulder. "I -- we'd better get Emma up to the house and cleaned up. Come on, Rick, and bring that bike. Quickly!" She began to run up the long slope, impatiently dragging the child with her, and the boy shot a glance both awkward and apologetic at Babs before he too raced after the blonde girl.

In some bewilderment Babs turned to retrace her steps and saw Bessie lumbering towards her with another stranger at her side. "Bib-B-Babs---" Bessie puffled importantly. "This is Jack Amberleigh --- he owns the Abbey, you know. H-he's going to take us there. He---" shortage of puff silenced the plump one, and the young man smiled, humour crinkling his grey eyes as he extended his hand.

"Hello, Babs. I gather you got stranded --- fortunately for young Em, if not for you! Didn't they have the decency to ask you back to the house for repairs?"

Babs was just beginning to be aware of a wet muddy skirt clinging to her legs, one of which was bleeding, and a grazed arm which would soon be betraying its bruises. She shook her head ruefully, and Jack Amberleigh compressed his lips. "No, they wouldn't, would they. Come on, we'll be at the Abbey in five minutes or so and Meg will sort out some first aid." He was leading the way as he spoke, opening the field gate for the girls, and gesturing to the Range Rover parked nearby. Bessie was looking much happier, wearing a smirk that suggested she was entirely responsible for the provision of this transport and its good-looking young owner. True to his words, a few minutes later the Range Rover was speeding up a tree-lined drive towards the gracious old Abbey, whose ancient stone had mellowed to a soft gold through four centuries of sunlit drowsing. The imposing entrance and the great echoing hall with its carved and blackened oak and magnificent tapestries impressed even Bessie, for whom nothing ever compared with the fabled Bunter Court, and Fatima almost purred when she was shown into a vast sitting room, all soft chintzy comfort, overlooking the rolling parkland. Meg, who proved to be the housekeeper to whom Babs had spoken on the phone, hurried Babs through to a large kitchen beyond a green baize door and produced brisk and efficient first-aid.

Babs thanked her, feeling much better after these administrations, and prepared to take leave of their kind host, but it seemed tea was next on the menu, at which suggestion Bessie's eyes glowed hungrily behind her big spectacles. It seemed churlish to refuse, even though Babs was increasingly worried over the long delay in reaching the site. Also, her chums would be worrying too, wondering what had happened to herself and Bessie. As though he read the trend of her thoughts, Jack Amberleigh said easily: "I'll run you both along to the site, don't worry. Another half hour won't make much difference."

"You're very kind," said Babs awkwardly. "We don't want to be a bother."

"Nonsense!" He gave a rueful smile. "Actually, I'm depending on you infants to make a miraculous discovery and save the Abbey's fortune."

Babs wondered if he was serious, but his wry expression belied the seriousness of what he told them over the very delicious tea of scones and fruit cake and rich buttery shortbread. The deaths within two years of both Jack's father and his older brother had resulted in ruinous inheritance duties, so much that already Jack had been forced to sell

off part of the estate, and it was doubtful whether the Abbey itself would survive much longer.

"I'm so sorry," said Babs sympathetically, knowing how she would feel had she to leave such a well-loved old family home, which had been in the family's possession for nearly four hundred years. To complicate things further, a very wealthy local business developer had long had greedy eyes on Amberleigh and had now formed a consortium of like-minded cronies to wait impatiently for Jack to be forced to give up his inheritance. Already they had drawn up the plans for a leisure complex and large luxury hotel.

"Which the local community doesn't want," Jack said grimly, "any more than they want the new road."

"Oh, I sus-say," Bessie decided it was time she made a contribution to the discussion, "if we fuf-find a lot of treasure you'll be rich and you won't have to sus-sell the Abbey?"

"Something like that. Although any treasure might have to go to the crown." Jack stood up. "Well, girls, if you're ready, I'd better run you down to the camp."

The site proved to lie only a short distance from the Abbey gates. Jack pointed out the site area, which already had been pegged out in a neat grid pattern in preparation for digging. At the far end of the field several Portacabins had been erected to house tools, instruments and other equipment, not least paperwork, and a little farther along a narrow lane was the camp where the volunteer workers were to be housed. At the sound of the Range Rover's approach several anxious-faced girls ran towards the gate. Clara, in the lead, of course, giving a great whoop as she saw Babs alight.

"Thank goodness! Where on earth have you been?"

"There's ructions on!" cried Mabel Lynn, her grin of greeting belying this statement. Then Marjorie, noticing Babs' traces of the recent rescue activity, wanted to know what had happened. Bessie was only too happy to supply her version, while Jemima and the others, with a tall, dark-haired girl, came hurrying to join the group. Everyone was talking at once, and Babs turned to thank Jack Amberleigh, and caught the meaning little salute he gave the dark-haired girl. He shook his head in dismissal of Babs' thanks and with a cheerful, "Be good, girls," climbed back into the Range Rover and drove away.

Jemima drew the dark-haired girl forward. "This is Jen," she announced, "the official Co-ordination Officer and Chief Spartan of the Dig."

Jen laughed merrily. "In other words, the dogsbody of this affair. Any problems, come to me and I'll do my best. Now, you're Babs and Bessie, aren't you? I've put you in with your friends." She was leading the way as she spoke, towards the first of the huts. Bessie barged in first and Babs followed, blinking at the dimness within then biting her lip in wry amusement as she took in the interior details. Bessie came to a halt.

"W-where's my room?"

"This is it," said Clara, with a wave that encompassed the cavernous army hut. "Isn't it big enough for you, Fatima?"

"But where's my bed?" Bessie glowered at the double tier bunks down one side, and the assortment of sleeping bags, pallets and ancient "biscuits" arrayed along the opposite wall. "I can't sleep on the floor, or one one of those!" she cried indignantly.

"We'll hire a crane to hoist you up," offered Diana, who had joined the group.

"I'm sorry, girls," broke in Jennifer Maybury, who was also secretary of the Coldburne Archaeological Society, "it is a bit spartan, I'll admit. We'd got you down for the hostel but the other school party arrived this morning and one of our committee

ladies settled them there." She was beginning to look harassed. "We've never organised such a big effort before, we---"

"Don't worry --- we'll be fine," Babs smiled. "Take no notice of Bessie --- she can't help it."

Jen still looked concerned. "You're all so young. I ---"

"Are you there, Jen? You're wanted in Admin." A tall young man in expensively casual garb appeared at the door. He waved one hand in a somewhat patronising greeting at the girls and turned to Jen. "Haven't you got this lot sorted out yet? I said from the start we ---" His voice faded aware as Jen said, "Yes, Richard, coming..." and followed him outside.

"Well, girls, let's get organised, said Babs cheerfully. "I see there are lockers. Did you bag two for Bess and me? I suggest we---"

"And I suggest you wait for me to do the organising. I'm in charge of you now!"

The girls spun round. Gasps escaped them, then silence closed in as they stared at the familiar figure in the doorway. Cold grey eyes glinting the malice of their owner, thin mean lips compressed with spite in a thin unattractive face framed in straight brown hair that did nothing to enhance the whole; Constance Alma Jackson; the most unpopular prefect at Cliff House and old enemy of the happy popular Fourth Form chums.

In one word: trouble!

* * * * *

"Well, don't stand there as though you'd never seen me before," she snapped. "Get your beds made up, then check this rota of jobs. You're on cookhouse duty today and tomorrow."

"Cookhouse duty?" Clara gaped. "We're here to hunt for Saxon artifacts!"

"Connie thinks they're something you eat --- like foreign artichokes," sniggered Diana.

Connie glared. "Where are the other two? Lydia Crossendale and Rosa Rodworth?" she demanded.

Diana shrugged. "I don't know --- I'm not their keeper."

"Well go and find them, now," said Connie.

Clara's cheeks were beginning to fly the red flags. "Look here!" she cried. "You can't boss us about now. We're not at school!"

"No!" they chorused. "Anyway, Babs is in charge. Primmy said so!"

"*Miss* Primrose," Connie said icily. "That was before I knew I'd be able to re-arrange my holiday dates." She turned a spiteful glare on Babs. "You are not fit to be in charge of anything, Barbara Redfern. You look filthy. Go and get cleaned up, at once."

Angry murmurs came from the chums. "Shall we throw her in the pigswill?" Diana asked. "Just say the word, Captain!"

Clara and Janet and Leila moved instantly, obviously longing to put this idea into action. Babs bit her lip. "No, girls, simmer down. Finish your unpacking, and someone help Bessie make her bed." She turned and faced Connie, and said quietly: "Away from school your authority is limited, Connie. We came here to work, not fight with you. Just remember that Miss Primrose is only a phone call away, and perhaps we should contact her if that's what you'd prefer. That said," Babs glanced round the silent circle of faces, all ready to back her to the hilt if necessary, "We do realise that the

mundane chores of the camp won't get done by magic and we're quite prepared to take our turn. Satisfied, Connie?"

Connie stared at them, hesitated, then blustered: "As long as you all remember that. And behave yourselves like Cliff House girls should --- not like hooligans. Do you hear me?"

"We hear you," said Babs, "and we are not hooligans."

"But we could be," drawled Diana meaningly.

"Yes," chirruped Jemima. "Pigswill hooligans. What sayest thou, friends, Romans and ---"

"Hooligans!" they all jeered.

Connie grimaced with fury, clenched her fists, then abruptly turned and stamped out of the hut.

The girls let great sighs of relief escape them. The advent of Connie Jackson was the last thing any one of them had expected, still less the battle for authority they'd just waged. Well, they'd won that one.

But what of the next...?

(To Be Continued)

* *

BRANDS FROM THE BURNING

by Peter Mahony

Part 2

Contemporary with the Gems describing the Toff's reform were the two great Highcliffe stories in the Boys' Friend Library. Written either side of the outbreak of World War I, they constitute a brilliant account of how decency, honesty and courage can influence an indolent, drifting character towards better behaviour. The first story, "The Boy with a Name", deals with the arrival of Arthur Clare (Frank Courtenay) at Highcliffe. A scholarship boy from the working-class, Clare falls foul of Ponsonby & Co. and the odious Mr. Mobbs. His thorny path is alleviated by the quirky friendship of Rupert De Courcy ('the Caterpillar'). As the story proceeds, the Caterpillar supports Courtenay to the limit; at first, because he disapproves of the nasty bias of Pon & Co. (and enjoys thwarting them); later, because Courtenay's sterling qualities rub off on him and awake his latent decency.

In the second story, "Rivals and Chums", roles are reversed. This time, the Caterpillar, through departing from the straight and narrow, runs into bad trouble from which Courtenay extricates him. From then onwards, there is no more back-sliding - De Courcy is reformed - "a brand plucked from the burnin'". The two characters have found that rare thing in each other - Kipling's "Thousandth Man".

De Courcy is a fine study. Good-tempered and bone idle, he is nevertheless a shrewd observer of his fellow-men. He has a keener insight into the duplicity of Ponsonby and the humbug of Mr. Mobbs than the straightforward Courtenay can ever contemplate. His view of education is that the upper classes attend school to get 'polish'; it is left to the "brainy working-classes" to acquire "vulgar knowledge". (I wonder if this reflects Hamilton's view of the "upper crust" who were in charge of his world - and, to all intents and purposes, were making heavy weather of solving its problems?) Under Courtenay's influence, the Caterpillar starts to work and play properly. He becomes a better scholar and an excellent sportsman, without diminishing his shrewd appreciation

of the 'wangles' which people get up to. One has the feeling that, by the time he reaches manhood, De Courcy will be a formidable person (provided he can keep his tendency to laziness under control).

Some readers of the stories see De Courcy as a prototype of Cardew. I challenge this strongly. Cardew, though amusing, interesting and more extensively chronicled, is nowhere near the positive development that the Caterpillar attained at the end of these two stories. The difference is that De Courcy is basically good; deep down he has an instinct for the proper way to go - much more like D'Arcy than Cardew. Granted, laziness and a desire for the quiet life led De Courcy astray, but once Courtenay starts to influence him, his innate decency comes gradually to the fore. Cardew's decent moments are largely matters of whim and perversity.

So, in the same year, Hamilton wrote two superb variations on the "Lost Sheep" theme. Talbot and De Courcy move from being negative to positive characters. Both become pillars of their respective schools; but they would not have done so without their "Good Shepherds", Merry and Courtenay. (Don't knock these two; without people like them, we would have a world populated by Cardews, Hazeldenes, Vernon-Smiths and Bunters - not a happy prospect.)

The motivation for Ernest Levison's reform was altogether different from Talbot's and De Courcy's. Although Talbot's readiness to value him as a "better chap than he makes out" undoubtedly caused Levison to re-appraise himself, it was the advent of his younger brother, Frank, which really turned the 'new leaf'. Occasionally, during his chequered career, Levison had turned up on the side of the angels - but not often. At Greyfriars, he had "owned up" to save Harry Wharton from being expelled along with him; at St. Jim's, he had prevented Lumley-Lumley (already pronounced dead) from being buried alive - a bizarre concept, but a rattling good story! Later, he deciphered Hookey Walker's code when Talbot was being threatened; then he put himself "in hock" to Mr. Moses to help Talbot with a money problem. These were, however, isolated redeeming features in a long list of misdemeanours. disapproval on the part of Tom Merry & Co. merely intensified his blackguardly tendencies. It was only when he realised that his brother placed a higher value on him than he deserved that Levison rose to the challenge.

The quick-witted, restless energy which made Levison such a formidable 'villain' was his best ally in following the "straight and narrow". Once he had made the decision, Levison bent his talents towards positive improvement. Always a clever scholar, he now displayed unexpected sporting ability. Soon he was a valued member of the St. Jim's Eleven and, though there was some initial back-sliding, he quickly became a leading influence for good - just in time for Cardew's arrival. If there were "Good Shepherds" guiding Levison, they were Talbot and Gussy. The latter conceived the bright idea of encouraging Levison Minor to 'go to the dogs' as a means of disturbing his Major's conscience. It worked, but it only provided the finishing touch to a process already started within Levison himself.

Whether Levison's reform would have lasted into manhood is a moot point. All the time Frank needed a model, Ernest would have kept straight. Once he had only himself to consider - I wonder? After all, he had a lot of his father - Poker Jack - in him. If the sharp practices of business life began to buffet him, Levison's old cynicism could have been roused and led him to kick over the traces again.

(To Be Continued)

* *

EDITOR'S NOTE: It has often struck me that the Bruin Boys were a kind of nursery version of Harry Wharton & Co., with Tiger Tim playing the Wharton/leader role and Porky-Boy, of course, doing the Bunter bit.

DRESSED TO KILL!

by J.E.M.

Remember those sinister chaps in one-piece, skin-tight suits who regularly featured in the old comics and story-papers? The D.C. Thomsons (*Wizard, Rover* et al) were especially famous for yarns about these starkly clad characters. The Black Sapper (of burrowing machine fame), the Clutcher, the Human Fly, the Hoverer and the Shadow are just a few of the names which spring to mind. Shakespeare's reference to "night's black agents" (Macbeth) fitted them as neatly as their body-clinging garments but those snug coverings were more than eye-catching fancy dress.

The Black Sapper clearly found such streamlined clothing very practical in his cramped underground vehicle. Other members of the one-piece brigade also saw the fashion as an aid to their nefarious activities. For one thing, it made them (literally!) very slippery customers to catch and, of course, in darkness or half-light, its wearers could easily be mistaken for shadows.

Almost without exception, these phantom-like creatures were ruthless outlaws. They were also exclusively male since, in those days, the opposite sex - in any attire - rarely found a place in papers like the *Rover*. It has been very different in more modern times with American and American-style "comics" featuring exotic females on the lines of Supergirl, Cat Woman and heaven knows how many others of the skin-suit tribe.

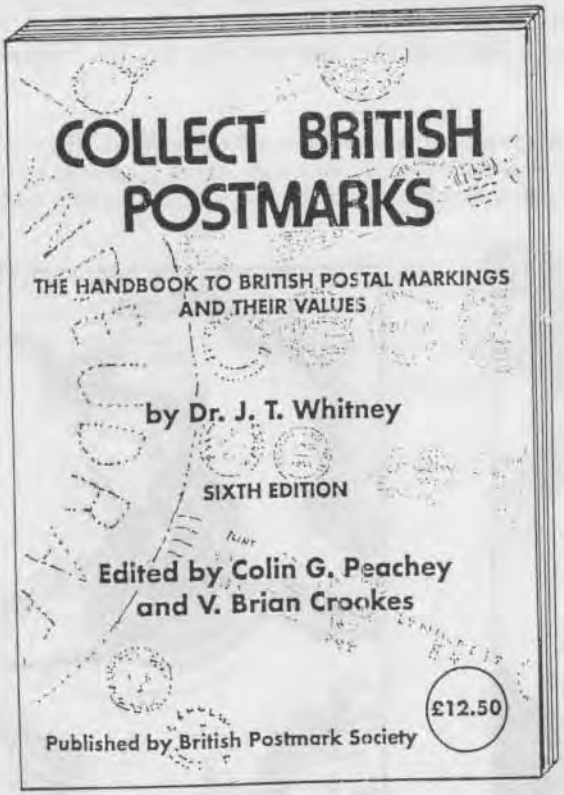
But, just as male figures like Batman, for example, follow very much earlier inspirations (The *Jester* had a Human Bat series back in 1907), the modern ladies are also far from original. At the beginning of the First World War, a French film director, Louis Feuillade, turned some very successful thrillers of the time into equally popular screen serials. One of these was *Les Vampyrs* about a band of cut-throats led by a female called Irma Vep (anagram of vampire!). She and her followers were not so much conventional criminals as murderous anarchists and, if the accompanying picture of Mlle Vep makes her look merely coy, do not be deceived. She was more bloodthirsty than any of her followers, casually picking off members of her own gang when the mood took her. Played by Jeanne Musidora, a famous actress in her day, Irma Vep was, in every sense, a *femme fatale*!

More to the point, she was surely unique as the innovator of a costume still popular with lady outlaws and adventuresses eighty years later. How

many other female garments from 1913 have remained the height of fashion - their wearers truly dressed to kill...?

(**FOOTNOTE:** A Sexton Blake story in *Detective Weekly* No. 46 had the freebooting Mlle Roxane doing a bit of burglary in the garb of Irma Vep but this was twenty years after *Les Vampyrs*.)

* *



COLLECT BRITISH POSTMARKS by J.T. Whitney. 330 pages completely revised. 6th edition published July 1993. The only simplified priced catalogue of G.B. postmarks from 1661 to the present day. £12.50 cash with order from co-editor V.B. Crookes, 126 Gammons Lane, Watford, WD2 5HY.

* *

JACK GREENALL'S ILLUSTRATIONS FOR 'MODERN FAIRY TALES'

by John Beck

I can add a few more details to those which have already surfaced about the artist Jack Greenall.

He illustrated stories by Bernard Buley in a magazine entitled *Modern Fairy Tales* published at 21/2d in the mid to late 1940s. Just the single story, no editorial or cosy chat, but obviously aimed at children despite the fact that the advertising (apart from the Ovaltineys!) was targeted to an adult market. I have a dozen or so issues between numbers 69 and 94. When I bought them from a shop in Lancing, Sussex, some years ago I was given to understand that they had originated from his recently deceased widow who had lived locally, so it is possible that she, and possibly he, had retired to the south coast.

Editor's Note: I too possess several of these attractive small magazines, all written by Bernard Buley and illustrated by Jack Greenall, whose range - from comic characters such as Laurel and Hardy to schoolgirls and fairies - must have been very wide.

* *

PICKWICK (Chichester Festival) by Mark Taha

As someone who's both enjoyed the music and read the script of this, in my view the best of all the Dickens musicals, I'd been yearning to see it revived. Now it has been, I only wish they'd filmed it in the sixties. (How about putting this revival onto video?).

Sir Harry Secombe, in the title role again after all these years, is now, one might say, old enough. Seriously - he gives an excellent performance, both as singer and comic actor; it's impossible to imagine anyone else in the role. Mention should also be made of David Cardy (the original Chris in "Birds of a Feather") as Sam Weller, Roy Castle - Sam Weller in the sixties, Tony Weller today - and whose health problems certainly haven't diminished his talent. Michael Howe as the con man Alfred Jingle reminds me of the old-style "charming cad" formerly played by the likes of David Niven and Terry-Thomas - although there's no physical resemblance - and Crispin Harris, in the non-singing part of Joe the Fat Boy, is a real scene-stealer. He may have wanted to make our flesh creep but he made my ribs ache!

In short, I heartily recommend this show and hope it comes to London - with, however one reservation. I didn't care for the way some of the songs in an excellent score, including most of "That's the Law" and parts of "Talk Your Way Out of It", were cut. May I suggest that any London production should include the script, the whole script and nothing but the script - especially with such well-staged numbers?

And, on a more prosaic level - if you go to see it in Chichester - the price they charge for refreshments, bring sandwiches!

* *

GIRLS CINEMA. 2 bound volumes of 20 issues each, No's 414 to 433 and 434 to 453. 1928/29c.
'CHAMPION' - Bound years 1949, No's 1405 to 1457. 1950, No's 1458 to 1509. Offers invited, prefer to exchange though, several duplicate items for exchange.
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* *

It helps the C.D. if readers advertise their WANTS and FOR SALE book and story-paper items, etc. in it. The rates are 4p per word; a boxed, displayed ad. costs £20.00 for a whole page, £10 for a half page or £5 for a quarter page.

* * *

ROBERT KIRKPATRICK (London): Thanks for the tip in the June C.D. re "Chums of Lynwood" - according to Maurice Hall's biography, it was meant to be included in the 1950 "Tom Merry's Own", but it didn't seem to have made it. However, according to Maurice Hall it was published by J.B. Allen in a "pocket-sized booklet priced at 3d.", for which he paid Richards £27. I wonder how come it was published by David Shields - did Maurice get it wrong, or was it reprinted? I suppose we'll never know. (See picture on page 28.)

Re John Buckle's article on Gunby Hadath in the May issue, and in particular stories on schoolboy insurance schemes - the most successful story along these lines was James Kennaway's THE DOLLAR BOTTOM, which was first published in the January 1954 issue of the magazine LILLIPUT. Set in a thinly-disguised Scottish public school (Glenalmond) it was filmed in 1980 by Rocking Horse Films with Robert Urquhart as the Headmaster and Rikki Fulton as a Housemaster, winning an Oscar for the year's best short film. It was re-issued in hardback form (along with another school story set in the same school) by Mainstream Publishing Co. of Edinburgh in 1981.

KEN HUMPHREYS (Nottingham): If I may, I would like to thank those CD readers who purchased a copy of my tape 'THE GREYFRIARS SONG' and 'HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH'. Their comments were most kind and appreciative. Generally the reception of the tape has been most gratifying - but radio stations constantly question whether the songs are 'commercial' and so they are reluctant to play them. I had a very nice letter from David Jacobs who thought the songs were 'splendid' but it appears he can do little to further their progress - and so I am experiencing difficulties all along the line. Even so I am still pursuing the project - undaunted! (He who would valiant be etc...)

TERRY BEENHAM (Chelmsford): My wife and I have just returned from a very enjoyable holiday in the Peak District. While we were in Derbyshire we visited Haddon Hall, near Matlock, one of the stately homes belonging to the Duke of Rutland. An unexpected extra interest was provided by an American film crew who were using Haddon Hall as the location of a film called "Dragon World", a fantasy about a little boy who befriends a dragon. There was much activity among the actors and technicians with extra props such as vintage cars arriving on the scene.

This set me thinking about the forthcoming T.V. series by "Carnival Films" featuring SEXTON BLAKE. Does anyone yet have information about the leading actors, set locations or proposed film shooting schedules? I would be keenly interested to have any details.

J.H. MEARNS (Kilmahog, Scotland): I really must tell you how much I am enjoying the C.D. these days... I find Margery Woods' Cliff House stories very interesting, and her recent biographical studies are especially enjoyable. I do hope that, in time, she may be able to get round to David Goodwin and John Lance. I've been trying to track down copies of the latter's BOYS FRIEND 4d LIBRARY 'Rivals of Rippingham' and 'Chums of Rippingham' (Nos. 333 and 337) for some years now, without success.

J.E.M. started something when he embarked on his Sexton Blake series of short articles featuring the masterly drawings of Eric Parker. And Donald Campbell in the April C.D. gave us some wonderful picture reprints. What splendid magazines were available in the 1920s and '30s! What illustrators! Something special has disappeared from human ken (except for collections!) as there is nothing today to compare with Stand, Windsor, Argosy, Passing Show, Lilliput, Picture Post...

Regarding the Sexton Blake Centenary, surely this merits a special memorial publication...

Editors Note: As mentioned earlier, I plan to make the November C.D. into a largely Blake issue - though our other regular features will not be omitted. I also have been promised some longer Blake items for this year's Annual, and hope that in this way the Centenary will receive due recognition. Of course, if I were flooded with interesting Blakiana material, it might be worth considering a special Blake memorial book - perhaps with the co-operation of the Clubs and the Museum Press? Would readers want this, and support it? Your comments please.

On another subject, Peter Mahony's recent comments on Harry Wharton's possible favouritism when selecting his football teams have aroused much interest. There will be more next month about this.

BILL LOFTS (London): I am of course most grateful for Marjorie Woods' kind comments about 'Men Behind Boys Fiction' - but it must be remembered that this was published in 1970 - some 23 years ago. It has faithfully been kept up-to-date through the years, but I'm afraid it is not a viable proposition to re-issue it today, due to the diminished number of old time collectors.

However a number of important entries have been recorded in the pages of the C.D. including that of 'Lewis Carlton'. The reason why one could not find him was simply that his real Christian names were George Edward. The 'Lewis' was just tagged on for writing purposes. He died on the 11th November 1967 at Yeovil, Somerset, aged 78. (A full report was given in the C.D. for July 1973 in an article entitled 'The End of the Trail'.) In my opinion he was far, far better at penning girls' stories than boys'. A relative was contacted, but was no use at all in providing fresh information about his output, through he did write for D.C. Thomson.

Regarding the *Will Gibbons* mystery raised by Marjorie Woods in the July C.D., seemingly with the coming of the Second World War, with restricted writing due to paper-shortages, Will Gibbons took a job as a clerk, never to return to the fiction market. On his retirement he went to live in a Charity Home for Retired Gentleman, when he spent much of his time sitting in Battersea Park reading the daily newspapers. One day, whilst crossing the road on returning to his digs, he was knocked down by a car and killed.

It was found he had left a considerable fortune (in fact far more than E.S. Brooks or Charles Hamilton) with no Will, so eventually his money went to the Crown.

TERRY JONES (Gloucester): I have just been reading again the wonderful "Courtfield Cracksman" Magnet series. It has just about everything in it: Christmas at Wharton Lodge, then a whole term back at school. Why is it that, at the age of 70, I still fear the eagle eye of Mr. Quelch?

Editors' Note: The following letter was sent not to me but to John Wernham, the President of the London Old Boys Book Club, who has published under the imprint of The Museum Press many fine books about our hobby. He and the writer of the letter are happy for it to be published in the C.D. Should any reader not yet know about the Museum Press's publications, details can be obtained from Mr. John Wernham, Museum Press, 30 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8RT. Details of how to borrow from the London O.B.B.C. Hamiltonian Library can be supplied by the Hamilton Librarian, Mr. Roger Jenkins, 8 Russell Road, Harvant, Hants., PO9 2DG.

GARY PANCZYSZYN (Derby): I just thought that I would send a short letter, thanking you for your time and trouble earlier this year in sending past items of the Museum Press, for me to devour at this end!

My education continues apace!

I shall treasure 'Tom Merry & Co.' (B.F.L. Number 30) for as long as I live, as the first Charles Hamilton B.F.L. I have read (preferable to the other version that I possess, in the Gem of 1933, I think). I have been discovering for myself the advantage that original copies have over facsimiles, from my first loans from Roger Jenkins' Hamiltonian Library. I only wish I had known in 1970, when I first read Billy Bunter.

I have found the scholarly Companion Volumes by yourself and others to be indispensable in my understanding of the works of Charles Hamilton, and extremely useful in my efforts to fill in the extensive gaps in my Gem and Magnet collections.

Many thanks again for helping me rediscover some of the greatest joys of my youth (Greyfriars and St. Jim's), and meet again some of the 'best fellows breathing', as well as the dear old cads and rotters! My best wishes go to you.

Mr. Len Hawkey, who is always enthusiastic and extremely well informed about illustrators, has sent me this C.D. subscription reminder! He also provided me with the cover by Albert Lock which I've used on page 32 this month, and the Harry Rountree *Playtime* cover shown below. *M.C.*

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

It was a cheery crowd of ten that assembled at the new home of our Secretary in Wakefield, for our summer break and barbecue.

Despite the unseasonal distinct coolness of the July evening, it was sufficiently fine and sunny for us to sit out in the garden devouring the delicious comestibles.

Retiring inside, Vera took pride in showing people around the new house which, though not so large as the Vicarage, seems ideal. Our Secretary has got his priorities right and is having a purpose built library for his beloved books!

A cosy informal chat in the living room, sampling Vera's delicious baking over cups of coffee, made a perfect end to a most enjoyable evening. The latest books from Macmillan (as reviewed in the July C.D.) were on view and to round off the proceedings, Geoffrey read a very funny piece from the Magnet "China Series".

We all wish Geoffrey the very best in his retirement as Vicar of Thornes Parish and trust that he and Vera will have many happy years together in their new home.

Our next meeting is at our usual venue in Leeds on 14th August.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

LONDON O.B.B.C.

The July meeting at the Chingford Horticultural Society Hall was entertained by Bill Bradford's talk on "The Other Publishers". These included Cassell & Co., The Religious Tract Society, Aldine and Pearsons. Brian Doyle gave the second part of his talk, "The Wonders of an Hour" which ended with the Longfellow quotation, "Youth comes but once in a lifetime" Mark Taha's film and television quiz was won by Peter, followed by Larry and Brian. The August meeting will be on Sunday 8th at the Salisbury home of Roy and Gwen Parsons.

SUZANNE HARPER

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FOR SALE: Bunter, Blyton, Comics, Schoolgirls Own Annuals, Sexton Blake. Astounding Science Fiction & Galaxy pulps (1950's/60's) + reference books & others. SAE please to Robert Smerdon, 5 Kipling Place, St. Neots, Cambs PE19 3RG.

* *

FOR SALE in more or less mint condition: published by HOWARD BAKER, 1972 - SEXTON BLAKE, STAR OF UNION JACK & DETECTIVE WEEKLY: An Omnibus. This volume contains: *The Plague of the Onion Men* by G. Evans, *Behind the Fog* and *Sexton Blake Wins* by R. Murray, *Land of Lost Men* by R. Hardinge, *The House of Light* by E.S. Brooks and Detective Weekly No. 1 by L. Jackson. *Price* £3 plus postage. R. Quibell, 71 Hampton Lane, Blackfield, Southampton, SO4 1WN.

HOME FROM HOME

by Ted Baldock

> It wasn't very large certainly, being about six feet long by four broad. It couldn't be called light, as there were bars and a grating to the window; which little precautions were necessary in the studies on the ground floor looking out into the close, to prevent the exit of small boys after locking-up, and the entrance of contraband articles.
>
> *Tom Brown's School Days*

> A small boy put his head into the eight by six room that Allingham occupied at Gate House.
>
> R.S. Warren Bell. *Greyhouse Days.*

"Show me a man's library, and I will tell you the type of man he is". So runs an old adage. Much the same may be said regarding houses, flats, rooms and school studies. They reflect in a very marked way the character and leanings of their respective owners. The neat and tidy, the careless, immaculate (most uncomfortable these) all give a reasonably accurate picture to the discerning eye.

The study - that Sanctum Sanctorum of privacy (?), that temporary retreat from the madding world, differs in individual schools. At one end of the accommodation scale it assumes the appearance, and frequently the dimensions of, a mere cubicle, and may be described as such. It could be a small as eight by six feet or so as at Greyhouse, with barely space for a minute table or desk, a chair and a small shelf for books. Ample perhaps for a solitary fellow in which to "burn the midnight oil", but of little use as the scene for study "feeds" such as are often described in the *Magnet* and *Gem*. Thence onwards through a range of sizes one reaches the typical Greyfriars study as exemplified in the *Magnet*. A handsome sized apartment, happily housing, according to the resources of the incumbent, a sofa, possibly an armchair, several ordinary chairs, a table and a desk - sometimes two. There was also always ample space for that most important perquisite, the cupboard for the storage of a miscellaneous selection of articles; old books, footballs, cricket gear, boxing gloves, etcetera, and of course "tuck". The fireplace is another important feature, and that which naturally follows, a mantle shelf usually decorated with an interesting collection of bric-a-brac from individual to group photographs of football elevens, fixture lists and old letters.

All things considered the studies at Greyfriars and St. Jim's are rather jolly and homely retreats, well lived in and perhaps - no minus this - a little dusty despite the constantly waged warfare by the school domestics to preserve some semblance of civilised equilibrium.

Studies tend to reflect the individualities and characters of their occupiers and, to a degree, their financial status, some fellows being, happily for them, more affluent than others. As an example, William George Bunter, in constant expectation of an almost mythical postal order, attempting to borrow sixpences and "bobs" up and down the Remove passage contrasts with Herbert Vernon Smith whose wallet, we are led to believe, is always well stocked with "fivers" while the occasional "tenner" is by no means rare. Thus it naturally follows that the contents of Smithy's cupboard exerts on the "Owl" a perpetual fascination. This particular recess is protected by a substantial lock, the key to which, together with that of his desk, resides permanently in Smithy's

pocket. Difficulties such as this merely present a challenge to be overcome. Access to this land of flowing milk and honey is not secure from the marauding Bunter. Neither, in the owners absence, are the comfortable recesses of his armchair or his cushions and sundry other amenities.

The morals and ethics of these clandestine activities are to say the least rather questionable. But the laws of the Medes and Persians have ever been a force in the land and are liberally interpreted at Greyfriars. Bunter, be he a Mede or a Persian, gives little thought to such niceties as Meum and Teum. After all "tuck" is the important consideration, other points may be settled later or, more happily, not at all.

There have been recorded many traumatic moments in Dr. Locke's study, an awesome abode. Also many physically painful episodes in that of Mr. Quelch, Master of the Remove, a sanctum no less intimidating, while countless boring tea parties have taken place in that of Mr. Prout who, as he has stated a thousand times, "likes to associate with my boys outside the form room on a social basis - being one of the fellows you know."

The study then is a species of "Home from Home". A retreat from the noisy world of school where a fellow, should he desire to 'grind' in earnest may "sport his oak". Should he (one has Skinner and Co in mind) wish to endulge in a quiet game necessitating the use of playing cards, or to enjoy (?) the narcotic weed; or be seeking refuge from pursuit or revenge; or be intent upon passing the shining hour in gentle slumber reclining on a sofa - the study has a multitude of uses, other than its official ones. Much of the on-going life at Greyfriars and St. Jim's centres on these abodes of leisure and industry.

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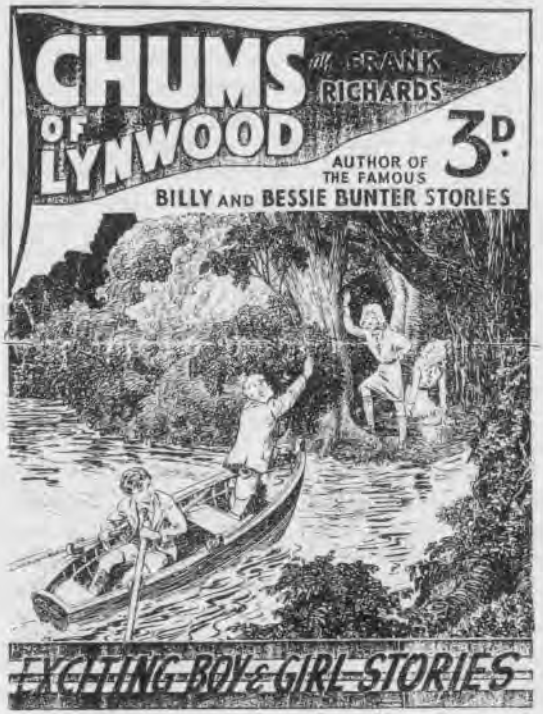

HIGH HORACE POWER

by Keith Atkinson

Coker struggled desperately to get his bike to go,
With tousled hair and frowning face he cursed it
high and low.
Bedaubed with oil and greace and dirt, he wrestled
manfully
To raise a spark, a buzz, a roar, but no success
had he.
"Having trouble?" Bunter smirked, and watched with
grinning face.
Coker glared and raised his fist, and flourished it
in space.
"Get out!" he snarled, at boiling point, as back his
foot he drew,
"I'll boot you three times round the quad," he bawled,
and Bunter flew.

Then, more by luck than management, there came a sudden roar.
The stink-bike rocked, the engine fired, and Coker
smiled once more.
He jumped into the saddle, swerved, and whizzed out
through the gate.
He shot down lanes to Friardale, quite oblivious
of the fate
Of hens and geese, which squawked and fled, shed
feathers in a cloud,
As dust and stones flew from his tyres, and exhaust
rattled loud.
The miles sped by beneath his wheels, and still the
pace it grew,
Defying death and gravity, as onwards Coker flew.

But retribution was at hand. As Coker took a curve
At sixty miles an hour, and was straining every nerve.
A flock of sheep blocked up the lane as tightly as
a wedge,
And Coker wrenched the handlebars and soared high
o'er the hedge.
A herd of startled pigs looked on as Coker landed by
And was plastered thick from head to foot with muck
from out the sty.
As he tottered back to Greyfriars all the locals gasped
out "Phew!!"
And the masters, boys and servants held their noses
as they flew.

MORE ITEMS FROM THE "MAGNET" AND GREYFRIARS LISTS
(Compiled by Brian Doyle)

EIGHT BOYS EXPELLED FROM GREYFRIARS (FOR GOOD!)

Edgar Bright
Arthur Carter
Esau Heath
Carberry
Ralph Stacey
Bartholomew Widgers
Ernest Levison
Prince Von Rattenstein

TWENTY POLICEMEN WHO APPEARED IN GREYFRIARS STORIES

Inspector Grimes
Inspector Irons (Richard Steele)
P.C. Tozer
Inspector Carter
Inspector Fix
P.C. Crump
Inspector Jude
Det.Sgt. Frost
Inspector Rymer
Inspector Trevelly
Inspector Stuce
Inspector Hotham
Det. Inspector Jones
Inspector Pickford
Inspector Chapman
Inspector Garnish
Inspector Snope
Inspector Simmonds
Inspector Parker
Inspector Cook

WAIFS AT GREYFRIARS

Ragged Dick (Compton)
Flip (Brent)
Tatters (Cholmondley)
Mick the Gipsy (Maurice Angel)
Skip (Richard Bullivant)
Eric Carlow

BUTLERS

Wells (Wharton Lodge - the best!)
Chandos (Portercliffe Hall)
Jeeves (Major Thresher's House next-door to Greyfriars)
Larkin (Mr. Vernon-Smith - Courtman Square, London)
Jasmond (Reynham Castle)
Pilkington (Cavendale Abbey)
Porritt (Monson Chalet)
Wadham (Oakwood Place)
Walsingham (Combermere Lodge - 'Bunter Court'), also (Hilton Hall)
Pawson (Gadsby Croft)
Blump (Eastcliffe Lodge)
Marchbanks (Trant Elms)
Packer (Popper Court)

GHOSTS! (The following places were reputed to be haunted)

Reynham Castle
Hoad Castle
Pengarth House
Portercliffe Hall
Wharton Lodge
The Greyfriars Cloisters
Polpelly
Monk's Island
Old Moat House (Wimford)
Mauleverer Towers
Lochmuir (Scotland)

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