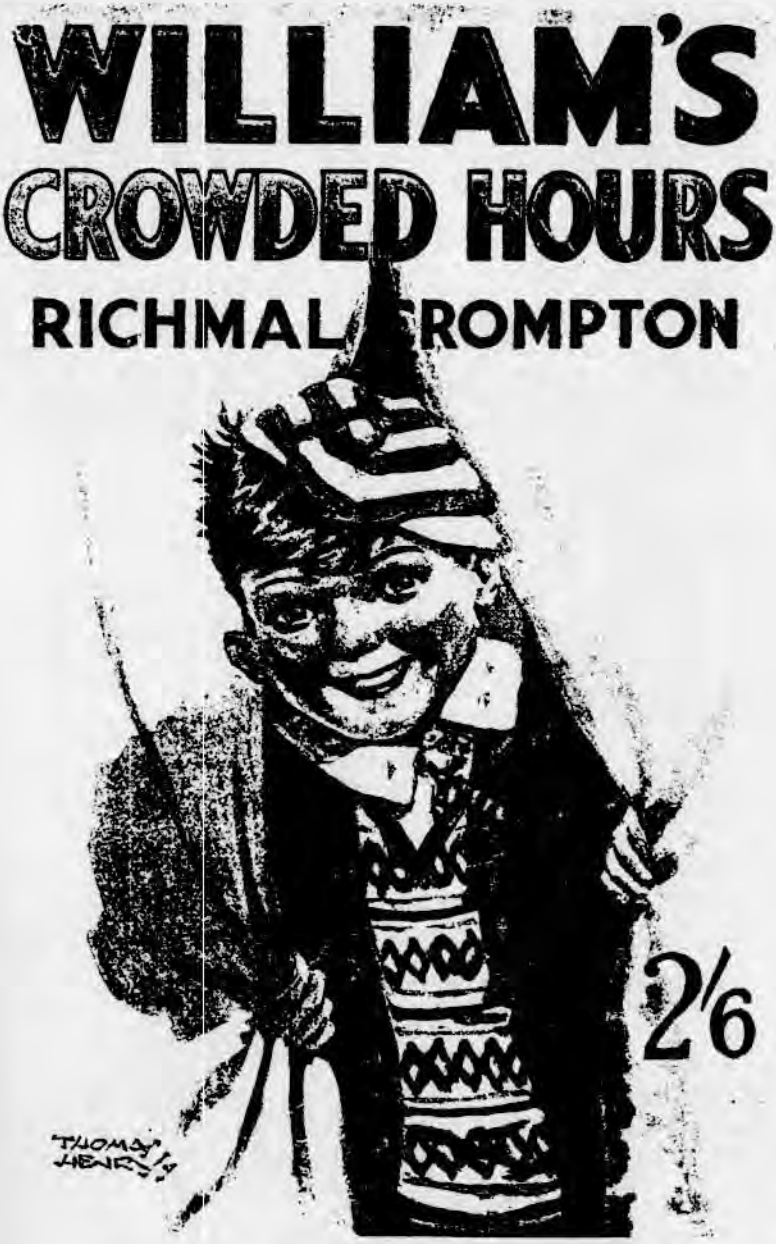
STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 49 No. 585 SEPTEMBER 1995



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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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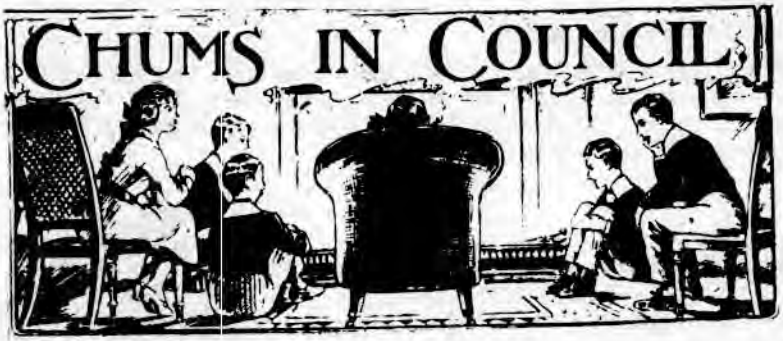


ANNUAL DELIGHTS

Once again I have the pleasure of informing you that preparations are in hand for this year's C.D. Annual. I have already been sent several extremely interesting contributions and I look forward to receiving further articles, stories, poems and pictures from C.D. subscribers during the next few weeks. As you know, the Annual aims to cover a wide range of collecting and nostalgic interests - so if you want to write about any of your favourite 'hobby-horses' please put your pens, typewriters or word-processors into action without delay.

Next month I shall begin to 'trail' some of the Annuals' contents. I feel sure that our usual high standard will be maintained and that the 1995 issue

will be as successful as last year's which several readers voted 'the best yet', 'magnificent' and 'full of surprises'.

Order forms for the Annual are enclosed in this month's C.D. and it would help considerably if these could be completed and returned to me as soon as possible, please. Taking increased printing charges into account I have still tried to keep the price as low as possible.

It seems rather strange - with the temperature in the nineties - to be writing to you about something as Christmassy as our Annual. However, as we know only too well, time quickly passes, and we shall soon be taking from the shelves our favourite winter stories for re-reading during the Festive season - and looking forward to the 1995 C.D. Annual!

Meanwhile, happy late-summer and autumn reading.

MARY CADOGAN

* *

RUN UP TO THE RIO KID?

After reading Bob Whiter's glossary of western terms in the May and June C.D.s, Una Hamilton Wright sent me copies of two interesting letters from Charles Hamilton. These were written to his sister 'Dolly' (Una Harrison) a year or two before the Rio Kid stories began to appear in *The Popular* in January 1928.

(M.C.)

My dear Dolly,

I am sending you a book tomorrow, to read. It is in big type, and easy stuff to read. Think it over and see whether you could write that kind of stuff. I have been doing some for a change, and by a weird chance, there is an opportunity for Peter, if Peter can deliver the goods. I do not mean in volume form, but in a weekly paper. If you would like to study it, I will send you a glossary of the language, which is easier to learn than French or Spanish. It goes like this:

Hunch. An idea or persuasion.
"Bad" man. A ruffian.
Six-gun. A six-chambered revolver.
Pistol. Gun.
Opine, to think. From opinion.
Sure. Certainly.
Galoot. A person.
Yellow. Cowardly.
Cinch. An arrangement or bargain.

Draw a bead. To take aim.
Aim. To intend.
"Forget it, feller!" Chuck it!
Hombre, man. The Spanish word used as slang.
Rope. A lasso.
Cayuse or critter. Horse.
Burro. Mule.
Great snakes! Great Scott!
Go slow! Take care!
Rough stuff. Violence or assaults.
Hit the trail. Begin a journey.
Put wise. To tell or inform.
Candy. Sweet-stuff.
Bad medicine. Bad or unlucky.
Pizen, tanglefoot, fire-water, red-eye. Whisky.
Three fingers. A glass of whisky.

There are yards more of this language, which I will send you if you want to study it.

This kind of muck is selling in volumes as fast as they can print it: it is the old "blood" stuff in a new guise, the chief difference being the language. It is, of course, founded on the Wild West films. It is so easy to write that I am surprised that anybody conducts a bus instead of becoming a thrilling Western author. If you think you would like to try the idea, read the book I am sending you, and try to write it over again in the same language. You can get tons of these books at Cox's if you want more, or Smith's. If you find you can do it after a little practice, I will write a first chapter, and you can go on with it. All that is needed is to soak one's mind in the stuff, and then type. It runs off like water from a duck after being mentally absorbed. It does no injury to the intellect, fortunately. I can do it when I am asleep. The amazing thing is that it is paid for just as if it was real. It goes like this:

> "Git!"
> Boss Simpson of the Flying O stood in the doorway of the bunk-house, staring at the Kid.
> His hand was on a six-gun as he spat out the word.
> "You hear me shout?" he snapped, "Git! Vamoose the ranch, you durned lobo wolf."
> Five or six of the Flying O punchers, sitting on the bunks, stared at Old Man Simpson. The boss of the Flying O was known to be ornery. But never had the punchers seen him as mad as this.
> The Kid looked round, carelessly.
> "Hello, boss! What's biting you?" he drawled.
> "Git!" roared Old Man Simpson, "You jest mosey lively to the office and ask for your pay, and then hit the trail pronto."

I should think that anybody could do that. Great American authors do it, and I guess they get away with it.

Best wishes for Xmas.

Your affectionate Brother, CHARLEY.

My dear Dolly,

I have now read your Drummond story, which I enclose. It is very good. The language, of course, would have to be whittled down, and of course no war story is any

good: and Boches are out of date: the Boche merchants have to fall back on crooks, who are perpetual. But you have caught the style quite nicely. It is Drummond over again. The Drummond muck was written by an ex-officer which no doubt gave him a chance: stuff like that would not be printed in ordinary circumstances. But the vigorous style is good: something happens all the time, and the reader does not have to turn over unread a page or two of description or philosophical reflection. It is quite a good idea to mix in some Drummond when forming a style. A good narrative style could be made up of a mixture according to this prescription:

Drummond vigour and go:	1 part
Macaulay style, easy; flowing:	2 parts
Carlyle ironic style:	1 part
Family Herald	1 part
F. Richards	5 parts

If you could read a little Macaulay you would find in him an easy flowing style that is useful to study. He was the inventor of the abrupt short sentence, which is sometimes very effective.

About the 'Kid' story, it should consist of ten equal instalments, same as the one you have. Each one should be a chapter, or at most two chapters. I think he was left in a very ticklish position, with Greasers after him in a hut: I don't know how he could get out, unless I should write the second instalment, in which case it would come somehow. You might make up a synopsis of chapters to work to: something like this:

CHAP II. Kid gets out of that scrape, gets hold of the stolen cattle and drives them back to the Bar: O ranch.

III. Man with black moustache; which means badness; riding to the ranch, attacked by a gang of rustlers, Kid Peter dashes up on mustang, gun-play etc, rescues stranger, and gets him to the ranch.

IV. Gang of Mexicans, or Greasers, lay for Kid on the prairie, nearly shoot him up: cow-punchers ride up in time: exit Greasers - track of a horse picked up and recognised as that of the Black Moustache man. Missouri Bill guesses he had something to do with the Greaser ambush: Kid doesn't.

V. Rancher's office robbed, money missing: 100-dollar note picked up in Kid's bunk in bunkhouse: Kid guilty, driven off the ranch, yelling mob, finger of scorn, etc.

VI. Sheriff of Blue Pine after Kid, racing and chasing etc.

VII. Kid arrested in calaboose at Blue Pine: lynch mob, Black Moustache taking a hand. Kid taken out of calaboose to be strung up: sees at last that black Moustache is after his blood.

VIII. Last moment, rescue by cow-punchers. Punchers ride with Kid to Bar:O, sheriff and posse follow: ranch besieged. Lots of bang, bang, but nobody killed.

IX. Ranch beset by sheriff and his men, aided by Black Moustache: Kid urges punchers to hand him over and save their lives: nothing doing: bang! bang! crack! crack! Black Moustache shot in the attack.

X. Sheriff with white flag: Black Moustache pegging out: confessed he bagged the loot and planted the note in the Kid's bunk: further, that the Kid's various uncles have pegged out and he is now Sir Peter Piper or what not: Black Moustache next heir: dies forgiven: last scene, Kid riding for the railway to go home and claim his title and estates, escorted by punchers waving Stetson hats.

That is a plot for the story, to be varied according to taste. I will send on some ranch stories. I enclose a glossary of language.

Your affectionate Brother, CHARLEY.

* *

WHEN CLIFF HOUSE AND GREYFRIARS WENT CRUISING

by Margery Woods

Come September and many of us are either returning from our summer hols or about to set forth, bracing ourselves for the traumatic experience that present day travel all too often entails. Perhaps the wisest of us have made the most of this glorious summer and indulged in lazy days in the sun sharing our favourite holidays with our chums of youth, our senior readers recapturing happy childhood memories of the golden age of the storypapers, and our younger collectors discovering why so many beloved characters of fiction still live on in our hearts decades later.

Exciting holiday stories of adventure and danger are countless in children's fiction from Victorian days onward, but surely some of the most spectacular and engrossing are to be found in the tales of the holiday exploits featuring the girls of Cliff House and the boys of Greyfriars.

Those fortunate girls and boys had some fantastic and far reaching holidays, courtesy of Frank and Hilda Richards and The Amalgamated Press. During the twenties, the restrictions of the Great War years safely past, Frank Richards set the pace and style with some of the greatest adventure trips to faraway places every written for youngsters. Series set against Africa, the desert, India, China and the south seas, peopled with intriguing strangers and tropical villains interacting with the boys in mystery and action that held young readers spell-bound week after week. In contrast, the Cliff House girls were not allowed to be quite so stricken with wanderlust. There was, of course, their first really long haul trip to South America in the early days of the SCHOOL FRIEND, when Marjorie Hazeldene got involved with the quest for a golden goblet and Grace Kelwyn of castaway fame got herself made queen of a native tribe. (This was the fore-runner of a series ten years later of a great African adventure when Majorie again caused complications and Mabel Lynn became the unwilling queen of the Intombi tribe, the deadly rivals of neighbours in the secret city of Shest.) Generally, however, in the 1920s, the Cliff House girls had to be content with holidays nearer home. They caravanned round the southern counties, went camping at Sunnington, where the mischievous Third formers put Bessie in the village stocks and Miss Bullivant kept a stern eye on proceedings, and sampled life on the farm. They did have a tour in Europe one year but it was not until the thirties, when Cliff House returned to a regular weekly spot in THE SCHOOLGIRL that the girls' summer hols began

to take in more spectacular far-flung parts of the world. The Third-formers were by then banished to their own devices, while the presence of Miss Bullivant on a holiday was unthinkable.

The new era kicked off with an exciting cruise to Venice, Spain and Algiers, to be followed the next year by the great Hollywood series when Bessie Bunter became a film star and found a double, Marjorie met a girl of the wilds and some grizzly bears, and Leila got kidnapped.

The girls (and perhaps their chronicler!) had got the taste for peril abroad and excitement in the tropics. The next eagerly awaited holiday found them under blazing desert skies caught in the age old spell of Egypt. Next came jungle jinks in Africa, spiced by encounters with hostile natives, ferocious lions, a long-lost uncle of Marjorie Hazeldene's and the introduction of the irresistible M'lizi, at first the girls' adversary when Mabs deposed her as queen of the Intombi but later their devoted friend, to be adopted by Colonel Carstairs. Sadly, M'lizi never made it to Cliff House as a Fourth former where surely she would have enlivened an already lively school no end. This failure to exploit a fascinating character is puzzling. Perhaps editorial policy decided against her, although she did reappear in a Christmas series during the siege of Delma Castle.

The next year the girls holidayed at home. The idea of holiday camps was catching on and the summer of '35 found Babs and Co. involved in a seaside adventure. But of all the holidays that entertained the young readers the cruising theme tended to return time after time, at Easter as well as high summer. Form an author's point of view the cruise was an ideal background, offering endless possibilities and few constrictions. Every port of call offered a new adventure, while the confines of the cruise vessel itself offered the scope for a large cast of oddball characters, any of whom could be used at the writer's whim, and conflict galore. The ship could be wrecked, hi-jacked from within or without, rendered helpless, drift off course, and always the school chums would solve the problems, look after the adults and bring miscreants to justice, repairing the ship if necessary. All was set against the holiday dream of radiant summer skies, crystal blue seas and at every fresh landfall a stunning panorama of tropical colour, exotic flora and fauna, luxury villas and grub galore for the Bunterish inclined. A movie screen was never needed to evoke the glamour and richness of the settings in the reader's imagination: the pictures were vividly painted in words and the authors brought it all to life. How skilled they were, and how sadly underrated.

One of the funniest and most entertaining cruises of all time was taken by the Greyfriars chums one certain Easter. The Removites knew all about Bunter Court and the vast wealth of the Bunter clan, so they could be forgiven their scepticism when Bunter started dishing out invitations left right and centre to join him on a luxury cruise on his Cousin George's yacht. Of course he did a spot of weeding out; no cruise for those without the wealth and class to keep up with Bunter style. Smithy passes, only just, providing that he minds his manners and dress — no loud waistcoats or flashy diamond tiepins! The reactions to all this, in the form of assault on Bunter's tender personage, are readily imagined even while the lads suspend belief, until a handsome steam yacht appears in Pegg Bay. They begin to have second thoughts.

Frank Richards was a genius at setting up a tantalising situation in which all bar the participants could see the joke, and extending it with pointed dialogue and artfully contrived timing until eventually the truth had to emerge. By which time it was too late; the lads were hooked.

Hilarity is assured when Coker and Co. fall for the invite, especially when Coker decides to pack a cane, just in case "those young sweeps don't behave themselves."

Richards keeps the situation going, with Skinner, Snoop and Stott sniggering in the background as the Famous Five board the Sea Nymph and set sail. Then the awful moment

of truth cannot be delayed any longer and Cousin George desires to get down to business of a certain financial nature. The would-be guests learn at last that they are clients, while Bunter gets his cruise free in return for drumming up so much custom for Cousin George's business. Only sea sickness saves Bunter from Nemesis at the hands --- and boots! --- of the Removites.

Coker's unique idiocy and powers of logic also save Bunter from further retribution when he decides he wants to be a paying passenger, if it can be arranged! and Potter and Greene will be his guests. No wonder the occasional cloud of puzzlement crosses Cousin George's countenance.

Bunter can hardly believe his luck; it has not yet dawned on his fat intellect that his guests are no longer under any obligation to be polite to him. And so, enlivened by the normal round of pranks, and marred only by a few attacks of mal-de-mer, the Sea Nymph gets under way. First excitement is a collision with a small boat from which Harry Wharton rescues a mysterious man called Mr. Griggs, whose gratitude takes the form of ordering Cousin George at gunpoint to get up full steam and get to sea. Unfortunately Coker and his henchmen are ashore in Margate, and Coker's wrath is fearsome when he sees the Sea Nymph take off without him. Coker is the last man to stand such cavalier treatment. He promptly hires the fastest motorboat available and sets off in pursuit, thus providing the intervention which enables Wharton and Co. to overpower the villainous Mr. Griggs, a bank robber now being sought all along the Kent coast. Naturally the great Coker takes full credit for the satisfactory outcome of that adventure.

But the best fun really begins when Sea Nymph reaches the Mediterranean.

Coker and Bunter had managed to leave the Rock of Gibraltar in one piece and were now eager to sample the delights of Spain. Bunter transferred a few dozen oranges into his capacious interior and rolled into the cork forest in search of coolness while Coker decided to hire three horses for a spot of riding. He and his long-suffering pals also took to the forest, and, like Bunter, managed to get lost. Despite Coker's superior qualities of leadership and resourcefulness he could not avoid the gang of bandits who waylaid him. They must have thought it was Christmas: three good horses, Coker's well-stuffed wallet and the somewhat lesser spoils yielded by Potter and Greene.

Eventually George sorts them all out and the party sets sail along the French Riviera, where the casino at Nice beckons magnetic fingers to Bunter. He is not at all downcast when informed that minors could not play at the tables; he has had a brilliant idea. He persuades Wibley, also a member of the party, to make him up and disguise him as a middle-aged French gentleman. Wibley, not fooled for a moment as to Bunter's true motive, agrees readily, and the transformation begins.

Bunter's progress casino-wards is one of the high spots in a story of many high spots. The entertainment is enjoyed by the Famous Five, following at a discreet distance, by the many visitors, people in boats, and the local population. Bunter's command of the French language would have added a great many more grey hairs to his form master's head, had he been present, and the Brigadier de Gendermes, majestically surveying the Promenade des Anglais, can't believe his eyes. An individual in a false beard! And a false moustache! He

must be a dreadful villain in disguise. The Brigadier de Gendermes is taking no chances, he promptly arrests Bunter.

Meanwhile, the redoubtable Coker also has designs on the tables, but not in Nice. The much larger and grander casino at "Monte" is more to Coker's liking. Of course the reader must understand that Coker is not going to gamble. He is going to win all the money from the casino to teach them a lesson and show them how much he disapproves of the evils of gambling.

Coker is going to play Roulette.

Being a large and burly lad Coker has no problem in gaining admission. Wisely, Potter and Greene quietly fade away as Coker proceeds to test his system. Unfortunately, the system doesn't seem to work at that particular casino, added to which a nasty little man keeps swiping the few small wins Coker manages to make. Obviously this rude thief has to be taught a lesson, and Coker is not the man to shirk his duty. Alas, he finds no support whatever and the great Horace is removed, violently and with absolutely no respect for his person or finer feelings, and lands on the pavement at the feet of the Famous Five.

Cousin George had quite a time of it during that cruise, what with bank robbers, rescuing Bunter from the French police and keeping the obstreperous Horace Coker under control until he got all his charges safely back to England and authority.

This is the perfect story for a lazy afternoon in deck chair or hammock, cool refreshments to hand and all thought of work banished. What more could one wish?

* *

I FLEW WITH BRADDOCK! (Well, not really but.....)

by Donald V. Campbell

VE Day, coming and then going, has reminded me that despite a most happy childhood it was surrounded by war - and at such an impressionable age too! I was glad Dad was in a reserved occupation and didn't go into the Royal Marines (it was what he fancied, and, he was tall).

For the rest I can't really remember being "without". It seems to me that if you haven't got it you don't miss it - if you never had it in the first place. Do you follow me? Never mind, what has this got to do with one Sergeant Matt Braddock? Well, he was the epitome of the war-hero for me.

Biggles I revere. Biggles, both then and later, had an aura that would not be defied. Whether he was being played by (Petty Officer) Jack Watson on the Children's Hour (Northern Region for the listening to, and thank you Nan MacDonald). Or whether he was in the bound pages of those "hard-to-get" library books he was supreme but (and it could be a big "but) he was not as the rest of us. He was a different class - he belonged with Drummond, Hannay, Wimsey and (even) Paul Temple.

Braddock was something else. Burly, with his wings hanging by a thread, capless and about to have a run-in with a military policeman is how we first meet him. The policeman loses and George Bourne (shortly to become Braddock's navigator) introduces us to the rest of Matt Braddock's make-up: *"...I became aware of his amazing eyes... blue, but it was almost as if a light were shining through them, for they were astonishingly luminous. His chin was strong. His mouth was big and full-lipped".* (Narrow lips were usually reserved for bad-hats!) *"The nose had a distinct twist across the bridge from an old fracture"* (no rugby playing mentioned as damaging the proboscis but we might infer *League* rather than *Union* as a possible cause.)

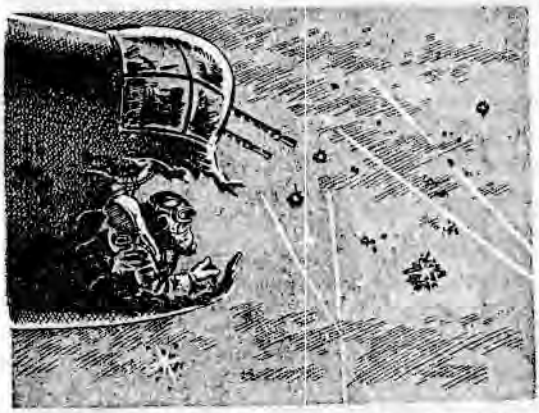
Braddock is here illustrated behind bars and the Thomson artist manages the full lips, the firm chin and hints at the bulk - the nose looks a little straight perhaps.

What appeals about this hero (and he is two fisted when needed as well) is his constant battle against the "would-bes" and the "system" - or, at least, the system as epitomised by military red-tape. But it is, more often than not, his fights with the pomposity of rank that gives (gave) the reader such a "buzz". *"If only I could be him." "I wish I could do that."* And so on.

The writer of this series managed to strike an interesting balance between the idiosyncrasies of human relations and the "derring-do" of flying and the war. An example: Sent on leave to the Cotswolds Bourne and Braddock end up chasing phantom airplanes that are causing trainee flyers to crash. Conflict occurs with a training officer who gets his "come-uppance" when he unwittingly fails Braddock who has taken the place of a real trainee. The phantom planes' problem is not solved by the middle-aged boffins sent from Training Command but by none other than Braddock. It would be interesting to know if the author's proposition about flare path reflections was based on fact. It makes for a jolly good story.

The Lancaster, F Fox, was made ready for one of the most important raids of the war. But, Matt Braddock, the man who should have been flying it was behind bars.

There is though something in the Braddock character - and in his rather fawning biographer, George Bourne - that grates somehow in the (later) older reader. In a way Braddock is a bit of a smarty-pans and he is, rot him, always right. The excuse for his rudeness, bolshieness and somewhat direct ways, is his VC (and bar). This cachet enables him to, on the one hand, get away with virtual murder, and, on the other, to be a bit of a bullyboy.



The bomb-sight was wrecked but that didn't stop Braddock. By the judgment of his unaided eye, he was ready to drop the Big Bomb.

The putting down of the arrogant fool or the paper-pushing nincompoop who halts the war effort seemed the very best of results to a starry-eyed boy at the time. I suppose that some of what was written was a conscious effort to aid morale, to boost whatever war-effort young boys could become involved in. *"Be a man, my son"* was part of the message. *"We are winning"*

was another part.

The propaganda value of radio has been well demonstrated as well as documented. Dictators, for example and seemingly quite naturally, take the broadcasting services as their own property.

Braddock in his own (or his author's) way played his part in winning a number of different wars. What became of him? He bridled under unreasonable officers. How could he work for unreasonable bosses? Did he open a pub? That would have been a nice working-class touch. Or did he, with his sharp wits and agile mind, end up in the city?

How could he "cap" the final feat of "I flew with Braddock" (D C Thomson, Red Lion Books, - probably 1960s) of sending down - successfully of course - the "big bomb" right onto target without aid of a bombsight; buffeted the while by cyclone winds into his open and damaged forward turret?

Fortunately I don't need to answer the question.

* *

BANNINGTON BLUES

By Ernest Holman

One of the least mentioned amongst the writings of Edwy Searles Brooks would be his efforts when he took over the Authorship of the Blue Crusaders stories. The chronicles of this football team appeared in the *Boys' Realm* and, before ESB took the yarns over, there had been a long sequence of re-written stories from the past, under the editorial name of Charles Wentworth.

The Brooks touch was soon apparent in the *Realm* and before long the Club moved to Bannington and became associated with the St. Frank's lads. The particular series that always springs to my mind is the one concerned with the events surrounding the disappearance of Kenmore. Stories linked with one another appeared weekly in both the *Lee* and the *Realm*. I shall always remember keeping the series and, when completed, marking off the chapters in numerical order, switching from one paper to the other for continuity.

At one time, the Blues' winger, a schoolboy named 'Tich' Harborough, became a member of the St. Frank's juniors. How he managed his homework, classwork, soccer training and playing was never revealed, until - not surprisingly - he no longer appeared any more in the Establishment. The very last I remember of the Blues was a serial that appeared at the end of the *Nelson Lee*. This told of a rival attraction to the Blues, in what was then called Dirt-Track racing. I recall that, at the end, Blues won promotion to the-then First Division of the Football League. Readers were never told how the Blues fared against Manchester United, Arsenal, etc. In fact, no more stories appeared.

Some of the *Realm* stories were reprinted, albeit in abridged from, in the *Boys' Friend Monthly Library* and even in that form were always a good read. I was much saddened when the *Realm* folded, to become a film magazine under a new name. The Blues still appeared occasionally in the *Nelson Lee* St. Frank's stories. St. Frank's boys were regular attenders at the Blues Home Matches, and, even in the only substitute story of St. Frank's, the Blues were present at a Junior cup final, when Nipper and Co. beat Harry Wharton and Co. of Greyfriars. (Of course, by one goal scored in the final seconds!)

The Blue Crusaders - started as a Works Team shortly after the first World War - had a varied and intermittent life for a long while. They did not appeal to me very much until ESB took over the tales. He gave them life but editorially it was to be short.

Any Publisher of today who would have a shot at reprinting (not too small a print, though, please!) some of the yarns in their entirety?

* *

SEXTON BLAKE'S BIRTHDAY STORIES Selected by John Bridgwater

Sexton Blake's centenary or hundredth 'birthday' was celebrated by the publication of special articles and pictures etc. and in particular by Norman Wright and David Ashford's book *Sexton Blake*. Sadly no special centenary story is likely as no author at present writes Blake Stories. However, in an attempt to fill the omission a selection of past birthday stories is offered below. Very few stories were published on the exact birthday date as the date printed on the cover was usually the week ending or Saturday date irrespective of which day the publication actually went on sale in the shops. Consequently it has been necessary to choose the nearest date to the 13th December for each year. For this reason the selection has been confined to the weekly papers and as a birthday is a very personal anniversary only Sexton Blake's own papers, namely Union Jack and Detective Weekly, have been considered. Being published in the first week of every month Sexton Blake Library and Boy's Friend Library do not qualify.

Owing to the difficulty of dating the very early undated 1/2d Union Jacks only the one actually available is listed. Pre 1914 UJs not available have been allotted a calculated date using the few known accurate dates available as basis.

It is unfortunate that Blake's birthday just missed many fine Christmas numbers but it seems that the Amalgamated Press might have come to realise the growing importance of his birthday in the 1920s. From then on they published a star author's story on the nearest date. These include stories by G.H. Teed, E.S. Brooks, Lewis Jackson, R.M. Graydon, and Gwyn Evans' marvellous Christmas yarns. It is perhaps significant that the great occasion

of UJ 1,000 just about qualifies for the 29th anniversary. There is also a good number of famous characters appearing in the birthday tales. Splash Page heads the list, which is as it should be. G.M. Plummer comes second, also fitting, then Yvonne, Leon Kestrel, Prof. Kew, Huxton Rymer, the Three Musketeers and Zenith tying for third place. It is also notable that Nelson Lee paid his respects in 1916 for the 23rd anniversary. The list also shows that the non-Blake years of the mid 1930s are not without interest.

Anniv/ Birthday	Date	UJ No.	Story	Author	Famous Characters
½d Union Jack					
3rd	10.12.96	138	Bravo! Blake	E. Treeton	-
Union Jack Second Series					
11th	(10.12.04	61	Non-Blake		
	(17.12.04	62	The Mystery of Hilton Royal	A. Davis	-
12th	16.12.05	114	Sexton Blake's Christmas	N. Goddard	-
13th	15.12.06	166	Hot on the Scent	E.J. Gannon	-
14th	14.12.07	218	By Royal Command	W.M. Graydon	-
15th	11.12.08	270	The Great Cattle Show Mystery	E.J. Gannon	-
16th	12.12.09	322	Sexton Blake, Sandwich Man	W.M. Graydon	-
17th	13.12.10	374	Accessory After the Fact	W.J. Lomax	-
18th	14.12.11	427	The Rajah's Vow	E. Brindle	-
19th	11.12.12	479	The Case of the Balkan War Correspondent	W.M. Graydon	-
20th	12.12.13	531	The Blackmailer's Secret	A. Murray	Prof. Kew
21st	13.12.14	583	The Case of the Belgian Relief Fund	J.W. Bobin	E.Q. Maitland
22nd	14.12.15	635	The Case of the Engleby Ear-rings	J.W. Bobin	G.M. Plummer
23rd	16.12.16	688	In Double Harness	R.M. Graydon	Nelson Lee, The Bat
24th	15.12.17	740	The Amazing Affair of the Brixton Burglary	J.W. Bobin	-
25th	12.12.18	792	The Mystery of the Missing Bolshevic	W.M. Graydon	-
26th	13.12.19	844	The Case of the Man in Motley	Anthony Skene	Zenith
27th	10.12.20	896	The Mystery of Littlethake Cottage	C. Hayter	-
28th	10.12.21	948	The Wonder Man's Challenge	E.S. Brooks	Waldo
29th	9.12.22	1000	The Thousandth Chance	G.H. Teed	(Yvonne, Rymer, (Wu Ling, (Kestrel, (Prof. Kew, (Plummer, (3 Musketeers, (Black Duchess, (Zenith,
29th	16.12.22	1001	The Diamond Special	G.H. Teed	3 Musketeers
30th	15.12.23	1053	The Shadow of the Past	Lewis Jackson	Kestrel
31st	13.12.24	1105	Sexton Blakes Xmas Truce	G.H. Teed	Yvonne, Rymer
32nd	12.12.25	1157	The Mystery of Mrs. Bardell's Xmas Pudding	Gwyn Evans	Splash Page
33rd	11.12.26	1208	Adventure of the Two Devils	G.H. Teed	Nirvana
34th	10.12.27	1260	The Affair of the Black Carol	Gwyn Evans	Splash Page, Ruff Hanson
35th	15.12.28	1313	The Crime of the Christmas Tree	Gwyn Evans	Splash Page, Robin Hood League

36th	14.12.29	1,365	The Mistletoe-Milk Mystery	Gwyn Evans	Splash Page, Ruff Hanson, Robin Hood League
37th	13.12.30	1417	The Man Who Hated Christmas	Gwyn Evans	Splash Page
38th	12.12.31	1469	A Corner in Crooks	R.M. Graydon	Criminals Confederation
39th	10.12.32	1521	The Masked Carollers	Gwyn Evans	Splash Page
Detective Weekly					
40th	16.12.33	43	The Christmas Circus Mystery	Gwyn Evans	Splash Page
41st	15.12.34	95	Due for Sentence!	Paul Urquhart	-
			plus a Blake play	Gwyn Evans	-
			The Christmas Cavalier		
42nd	14.12.35	147	Non-Blake		
			Charlie Chan takes charge of things in Blake's absence in "Behind that Curtain" by Earl Derr Biggers.		
43rd	12.12.36	199	Non-Blake		
			In Blake's continued absence Geo. E. Rochester's Duke and Ginger cope with the Christmas ghost in "The Ghost Rings".		
44th	11.12.37	251	The Mystery of Senor 'Z'	Warwick Jardine	Dearth Tallon
45th	10.12.38	303	Non-Blake		
	17.12.38	304	The Clue of the Painted Smile (Reprint of UJ 1532)	Donald Stuart	
46th	16.12.39	356	The Leering Castle Crime (Reprint of UJ 478)	A. Murray	Carlac

* *

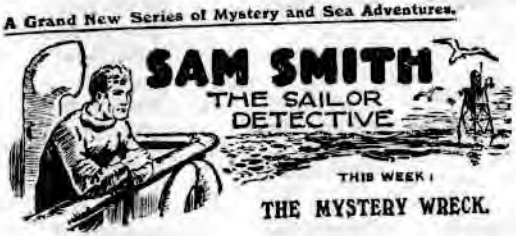
SAM SMITH - A.B. THE SAILOR DETECTIVE

by Bill Lofts

Sam Smith was reputed to be one of the smartest detectives in London. Unfortunately, he became so well known to local criminals that it hampered his investigations. Consequently he decided to seek other fields, with a complete change of air.

He certainly got it, as he applied for a post of detective with the Western Ocean Steamship Company, being posted to the Royal Mail 'Gigantic' that sailed between Southampton and New York.

This large steamship also conveyed passengers on pleasure cruises, as well as travellers who sailed frequently between the two large ports. It was felt that Sam Smith, who was a young man with a pleasant face, would serve much better by being undetected on board, being disguised as an ordinary seaman. He not only did the same duties, sleeping in the ordinary seaman's quarters,



but also spent some time on watch in the crows nest. So he certainly obtained his wish to get a change of air!

Responsible only to the Captain of the ship, and Mr. Gosling, Chief Steward, his adventures were greatly varied in the pages of the comic *The Butterfly* for the first six months of 1931. Apart from the usual petty thieves, card sharpers and swindlers usually had rich pickings from the idle rich on their cruises across the Atlantic. Sam Smith was involved in catching smugglers and stowaways, spotting mysterious craft and shipwrecked suspicious sailors. Almost any nautical mystery had Sam Smith there on hand to solve it.

The author is not known, but it could have been either Lewis Jackson or Stanton Hope, who both wrote for comics as well as producing Sexton Blake stories. Lewis Jackson was an A.B. during the First World War.

A novel, shortish series, rather removed from the ordinary detective comic series, that obviously interested readers at the time.

* *

1066 AND ALL THAT HAMILTON

by Peter Mahony

The Bunters, so we were often told, "came over with the Conqueror". Magnet fans will not be surprised to learn that they did not. But a surprising number of others (less illustrious than the Bunters, of course) apparently did. Of the 700 Norman Knights who fought at Senlac, 34(5%) sired "Hamilton Families". When the field is narrowed to William I's chief supporters, the percentage is even more impressive - 14 out of 48, or 30%.

The foremost 14 were headed by D'Arcy. The Honourable Arthur Augustus, second son of Lord Eastwood, could indeed trace his ancestry back to the Normans. Whether William's D'Arcy was "a glass of fashion, and a mould of form" is debatable. He was probably much more like the pugnacious Wally than the urbane Gussy. Nevertheless, the D'Arcy's were among the leading conquerors.

Two other St. Jim's names in the Norman ranks were St. Leger and Talbot. The aristocratic connections of Gerald Cutts' crony are well-documented and the St. Jim's Fifth Former had a certain amount of moral fibre - enough to imagine his ancestor leading a charge up Senlac Hill anyway.

The appearance of Talbot among the muster rolls of Hastings is more surprising. The 'Toff' had inherited the requisite ration of courage, but the chequered career of his criminal father, "Captain Crow", showed just how far the line had fallen since the heady days of the Conquest. Perhaps the reformed Talbot will eventually restore the family name and reputation, though it will probably require another generation or two to eradicate the stigma of Captain Crow and the Toff.

Rookwood was well-represented among the 1066 commanders. Lovell, Neville, Bohun and Tracy were all lieutenants of William I. Lovell and Neville are not surprising: the other two are.

Arthur Edward Lovell, headstrong and impetuous, fits well into the image of a belligerent Norman knight. Laurence Neville, George Bulkeley's pal, captain of boxing and

level headed prefect, once defied the autocratic Dr. Chisholm when an injustice was being committed at Rookwood. It is not difficult to imagine an ancestral Neville doing his stuff with sword and lance. Both were probably loyal supporters of the Norman Duke.

So, no doubt, was Bohun; though whether he expected to find a schoolmaster among his descendants in a moot point. Frank Bohun, master of the Rookwood Third Form, hardly generates a war-like image. Perhaps William's Bohun was a staff officer.

Certainly, the Normans included a number of cut-throats and wastrels in their ranks. Tracy, forefather of Alan of the Rookwood Shell (and, come to that, of Gilbert, temporary member of the Greyfriars Remove) was possibly one of these. If he wasn't, his progeny must have been a source of sad disappointment to him. I imagine that Tracy the Norman had a sharp eye for plunder and 'pickings'.

Hamilton's gleanings from the Conquest did not stop at Rookwood's inhabitants. What about Owen Conquest, his Rookwood pen-name? I am sure his fertile brain, having trawled through the rolls of chivalry, latched onto the historic title as another 'same source'. It's surprising that "Owen" was preferred to "Norman" - though the latter was, perhaps, too obvious.

Highcliffe, too, had its representatives at Hastings. The presence of Courtenay, ancestor of the Major and his son, the dependable Frank, is not surprising. But there was no De Courcy in William's ranks - probably the Caterpillar's ancestors were too tired/bored to make the trip! There was, however, a Vavasour, who (I hope) performed more creditably at Senlac than his hapless namesake ever did in conflict with Harry Wharton & Co.

Another unexpected participant was Daubeny. The sharp operator, Sir George, sire of St. Winifred's leading "Buck", Vernon, was not without courage and resourcefulness. Like Tracy, William's Daubeny was a potential plunderer. The Saxons probably had a hard time with him.

All of which brings us to the Greyfriars contingent. Their connection with William's front-rankers is rather limited. There was a Vernon, fore-runner of the Bounder? or, perhaps more likely, of his ruthless relative Captain Vernon. If the Hastings' Vernon was ready to help William usurp the English throne, then Captain Vernon's attempt to disinherit the Bounder in favour of his own nephew, Bertie Vernon, is understandable - it was in the genes!

Ferrers is an interesting proposition. Was the Norman Knight upright, clear-thinking and resourceful like Ferrers Locke? Or was he villainous, devious and ruthless like Quelch's cousin Ulick Ferrers? This was, I think, a Hamilton case of getting double value out of one source.

One of Greyfriars' "casuals", Jim Warren of the Fifth Form, can also claim descent from Norman times. So can the notorious Captain Spencer, crook and bank-robber. Perhaps the Norman de Spencer was a pillaging scoundrel too.

That takes care of the "featured players". What about the extras? The Hastings' muster rolls contain: Blundell, Russell and Steward of Greyfriars; Darrell, Lawrence, Gray and Pigott of St. Jim's, as well as Martin and Clifford, another of Hamilton's *noms de plume;* Beaumont, Gower and Lacy of Rookwood; Drury of Highcliffe; Lane of Rylcombe; and Valence, the expelled Greyfriars prefect. Some of these, like Blundell, Darrell and Lane gave rise to sterling characters, but the 'dodgy' ones preponderate. Pigott (Hamilton inserted an extra 'G'), Beaumont, Gower, Lacy and Drury all provided escutcheons to be blotted by their dubious descendants.

Nevertheless, the Norman Conquest obviously provided Hamilton with a fertile ground for character-building. My guess is that he set out to provide an aristocratic lineage for D'Arcy and found a host of useful names for increasing his schools' rolls. Incidentally, there were two less obvious connections which I spotted during a visit to Battle Abbey.

One was a MAULAY; the other a MALEVERE. Could these have given him the Earl of Mauleverer and his nickname "Mauly"?

All of which goes to show that Charles Hamilton was ready to plunder any name-source that his wide range of interests encountered. His characters' connections with the Edwardian cricket and horse-racing worlds have already been the subject of my articles in the Friars' Chronicles. I'll bet there are others - it only needs a bit of lateral thinking to establish such connections. Any new ideas, fellow-buffs.

* *

GREY TOWERS COLLEGE

by Dave Westaway

Re Peter Mahony's request for information... The adventures of Rex Carew and his chums Tom Mordaunt and Bob Hunt of Grey Towers College began in the 1d Marvel, no. 14, under the title 'Three British Boys' on the 30th April 1904. Rex's encounters with the bully Peter Clegg and Burch his ally, his relationship with Bella the daughter of Dr. Kenward the headmaster and the villainous new boy Marah provided a lively 2 or 3 page episode each week.

'Old Tut Tut' was how readers referred to Rex due to his annoying habit of saying 'Tut, tut, tut' in virtually every speech. The stories were written by Maurice Merriman, otherwise S. Clarke Hook best known for his most excellent Jack, Sam and Peter yarns. The collected series in an abridged form appeared in Boys Friend Library #20 under its original title.

A new story 'Pete's Schooldays' using both Merriman and Hook's names was issued as BFL #23. This told the story of how Pete the Negro came to Grey Towers as a boy and the chaos he and Rex conjured up.

Rex is memorable for taking all mishaps including punishments, in his stride. His famous soldier father, Colonel Victor Carew, and his mother Lady Carew seem to have passed on neither fear nor humility to their son, as Billy the school porter soon finds out.

Although some 90 years old, copies of Marvel do turn up quite often and, not being much sought after, should not cost more than £1-£2.

* *

GEMS OF HAMILTONIA from John Geal
No. 17 Mr. Quelch MAGNET No. 1404

"Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove, smiled genially.

It was cold and frosty, but a clear and cheerful day. And, like the weather, Mr. Quelch's smile was frosty but cheerful. Quelch was in fact, feeling good, as he stood on the platform at Courtfield Station, and watched a train steaming in from Lantham.

First day of term was not always welcome to Quelch's pupils. Some of them, if not all of them, would have liked to prolong the hols. But to the veteran Form-master it was a welcome date. He felt like Kipling's soldier who smelt the smell of the barracks, or like the poet's war-horse who sniffed the battle from afar.

Holidays rather bored Quelch, and he was glad to get back into harness again. He was all the gladder, so to speak, because he had been away from Greyfriars a considerable part of the last term.

All was going well this term. Like so many schoolmasters Mr. Quelch always thought that everything was going well this term - at the beginning of the term. Later in the term, as a rule, it turned out to be just like any other old term, with its little mistakes and troubles and worries.

Smiling and genial, Henry Samuel Quelch stood and watched the crowded train steam in. He was going to be glad to see his boys again, and he hoped that they would share his gladness. Quelch had a hopeful nature.

The train stopped. Doors flew open. Carriages ejected their human cargo. Almost opposite where Mr. Quelch stood was a carriage packed with Removites - his boys. Then his smiling glance turned into the crowded carriage. Instantly the smile was wiped from his face, like chalk from a blackboard by a duster.

His brows knitted.

Genial Mr. Quelch of the first day of term immediately became grim old Quelch of middle of the term."

* *

WANTED: Good/VG copies of "Modern Boy" numbers 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 408, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418. A.F. TAYLOR, 109 Foxhunter Drive, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5FH. Tel. 0116 271 3078.

* *

WANTED: ENID BLYTON, W.E. JOHNS, CROMPTON. First editions in wrappers and ALL ephemera related to these authors. ANY original artwork related to Bunter, Blyton, Biggles, Eagle or other British comics and boys papers. ALL Boys Friend Libraries by W.E. Johns and Rochester. Many "Thriller" issues and first editions in wrappers by Charteris required. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, WD1 4JL. Tel. 01923 232383.

* *

BOWLED OUT

by Keith Atkinson

In Coker's mind was fixed belief
    At cricket he was master.
To keep him from the Greyfriars' team
    Would be a great disaster.
He watched as Lascelles sent down balls
    And vowed he could do better.
Five times had Wingate saved his stumps,
    He was in finest fetter.

The match with Rookwood was at hand
    And practice now proceeded,
But Coker felt his services
    Were desperately needed.
So Coker strode onto the pitch
    And begged the final volley,
Though fifty voices roared dismay
    And pointed out his folly.

If sportsmaster and County Cap
    Could not touch Wingate's wicket,
Could Coker, duffer, chump and clown
    Excel the best at cricket?
Larry stared, and then he smiled
    But being of good nature
He tossed the ball to Coker's hand
    Without undue debature.

Yells of laughter rent the air
    But Coker did not heed it.
With one fast ball he'd wreck the stumps
    And Greyfriars must concede it.
"He's going to bowl!" Bob Cherry cried,
    "You'd better mind your nappers!"
And Wingate grinned as Coker charged,
    Arms whirling like the clappers.

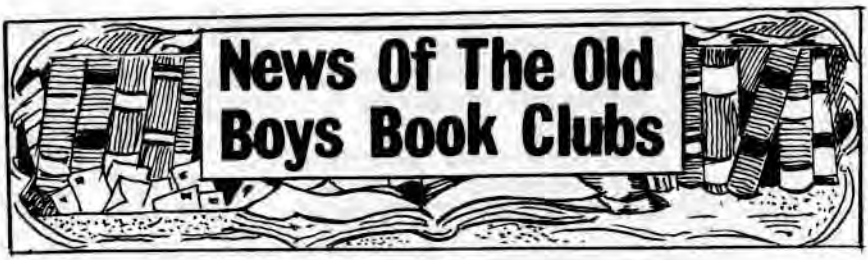
Then Coker bowled a cricket ball
    Like bullet from a rifle,
Though where it went to none could tell,
    Not even with an eyeful.
How even Coker could despatch
    In opposite direction
Remains a mystery, but he did,
    A fantastic deflection.

Crack! "Whoo - hoo - hoooop!" A roar was heard,
  But not a roar of cheering,
As Larry Lascelles rubbed his head
  And said things unendearing.
A giant bump rose on his pate,
  His face wore dazed expression,
And Coker blinked, his wide, wide cast
  Had stopped the cricket session.

He was not given time to think
  Before he was surrounded.
How many hands he never knew
  And feet upon him pounded,
And hurled him from the cricket field
  In wild and whirling fashion,
A gurgling, guggling, gasping heap
  Devoid of any passion.

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

COKER OF THE FIFTH.



NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

The holiday month of August took toll of our attendance with only seven present and lots of apologies. Still, it was a most enjoyable and convivial meeting, and we were delighted to have with us Dr. Nandu Thalange from the other side of the Pennines.

Our programme for the evening was "free and easy" with contributions from our own members. Dr. Thalange presented one of his diagnoses "The Genes of Horace Coker" - a serious but obviously tongue in cheek assessment of the character of Coker of the Fifth. From the description of Coker in the writings to the facial appearances as depicted by Chapman Nandu concluded that Coker was a victim of Fragile X Syndrome. To prove his point, Nandu gave us medical evidence of this condition - much to the amusement of the members.

Donald Campbell then played a recording of a Radio 4 "Storytime" item of over ten years ago - Rosalind Shanks reading "Jemima Gets Busy" a Cliff House story edited and chosen by Mary Cadogan.

To conclude, Geoffrey read three hilarious chapters from the Magnet Carter series (by special request).

Our September meeting will see "Comic Asides" with Derek Marsden from Liverpool (who has kindly stepped in to help out) and an item from Catherine and Eric Humphrey. Our October meeting is our luncheon in Wakefield in the presence of our President, Mary Cadogan, and (hopefully) our Vice-President, Anthony Buckeridge. We shall also have with us, Alan Pratt of London O.B.B.C. to speak about the Hardy Boys stories. All are welcome to our luncheon and evening meeting. Full details from Darrell Swift: 0113 267 1394.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

LONDON OLD BOYS BOOK CLUB

The first item on the agenda at the August meeting at the home of Eric and Betty Lawrence in Wokingham was a musical quiz played by Eric and won by Roger Jenkins.

Roger Jenkins spoke on "Rebellions and Barring Outs" in the companion papers, dealing with both permanent and temporary staff. Roger also won Eric Fayne's easy quiz, but dropped to joint second place in Bill Bradford's quiz in which members had to name as many authors whose surnames began with "W". Mark Taha gave his desert island selection which began with *Flashman and The Charge* by G.M. Fraser.

The September meeting is on Sunday, 3rd (the first Sunday) at The Roebuck Hotel, Buckhurst Hill, Essex for the annual luncheon.

SUZANNE HARPER

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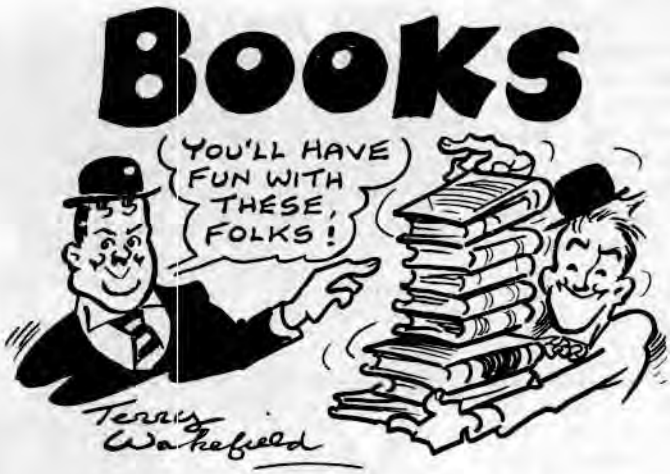

JUST WILLIAM DIARY 1996 (Macmillan, £6.99) and JUST WILLIAM CALENDAR 1996 (Macmillan, £5.99). Reviewed by Brian Doyle.

With these two superlative additions to their ever-growing 'William' output, publishers Macmillan have done it yet again. Following their complete paperback reprints of the entire William saga, plus many other associated books and items, they now enable admirers of 'the most popular boy in fiction' to let that endearing young rascal cheerfully usher in the New Year and then stay with you throughout the whole of 1996, thereby hopefully raising a smile for each new day.

The new Diary is a hard-back, boasting no fewer than 15 full-page colour reproductions of front-cover dust-wrappers from various William books, and colour covers of the old 'Happy Mag.' (plus a colour cover from a 1920s 'Tit-Bits Summer Special' (which is my own favourite!). There are also 78 black-and-white illustrations (all, of course, by the inimitable Thomas Henry, as are the colour pictures), some spread across two pages. The Diary measures 8" x 6", has 124 pages and ample spaces for every day of the year - though personally I wouldn't dream of spoiling this lovely book-cum-diary by writing in it!

For the very first time, we now have a special 'Just William Calendar' to grace our wall, and what an eye-catching item it surely is. Opened out it measures 24 inches long and 12 inches wide. The whole of the top half has a 'blown-up' Thomas Henry black-and-white illustration from a William

book, with caption, and the bottom-half has a small colour reproduction of a colour cover of a William book, or a Happy Mag., flanked by two more b/w drawings, plus the actual calendar section for that month, with more drawings. This makes a grand total of 12 colour and 51 b/w illustrations, and very effective they all look too. I feel it might have been better to have had a larger colour picture in the top half, but I expect that the cost factor dictated the present lay-out. I think the August lay-out is my own favourite but every opening is a joy.

I think that an opportunity has perhaps been lost in not marking certain dates with 'William' significance, e.g. the dates of birth and death of Richmal Crompton and Thomas Henry, the date when the first William book was published and that of the very first William story ('Rice Mould') to appear in Home Magazine, and so on. And surely appropriate Saints' Days might have been included - especially those for a couple of 12th century ones: St. William of York (d.1154) and St. William of Norwich (d.1144) (the first's date being June 8th and the second's March 26th). St. William of Norwich might be especially apt, since he was a boy himself and known as 'Little St. William' - regretfully he came to a sad and violent end in a wood just outside Norwich. But then William Brown was no Saint, as well we all known, and he was no worse for that...

Both the new William Diary and the Calendar are superb and heart-warming productions and would make ideal presents for family, friends or oneself. An ideal way to start the New Year - no Bills, just Williams...

KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS and ROBIN HOOD (each published by Macmillan at £6.99). Reviewed by Mary Cadogan.

Macmillan's excellent 'Little Classics' for younger readers series was launched last year and now includes ten titles. Each volume is most attractively produced, hard-covered, dust-jacketed and in an illustrated slip-case. Generally unabridged ('Little' applies only to the slightly smaller than usual page size) every book carries eight newly commissioned full page colour pictures as well as many in black and white line. Previously published titles are Nesbit's THE RAILWAY CHILDREN, Stevenson's TREASURE ISLAND, Lear's

NONSENSE SONGS, Anna Sewell's BLACK BEAUTY, Johanna Spyri's HEIDI, Grimm's FAIRY TALES, Alcott's LITTLE WOMEN and L.M. Montgomery's ANNE OF GREEN GABLES.

KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS uses Henry Gilbert's 1911 retelling of the great tales, while bold, almost stark, illustrations by John Vernon Lord atmospherically suggest the medieval period. Gilbert's narrative is fairly rich and allusive, with hints here and there of Tennyson. As Naomi Lewis in her splendid introduction says, it was he 'who had genius enough not only to waken and bring new life to the body of the sleeping Arthur, but to make him the Arthur for his age.' She provides an informative history of Arthurian texts that have become definitive for various generations, from the Mabinogian, through Geoffrey of Monmouth, Malory and the many flowerings of nineteenth-century Arthurian medievalism to T.S. White and other popular story-spinners of our own time. Anyone interested in contemporary versions of the Once and Future King's adventures and their influences will appreciate Naomi Lewis's comprehensive list and descriptions of very recent retellings by many distinguished children's authors (including Rosemary Sutcliff, Susan Cooper, Peter Dickinson and Penelope Lively). I learned, by the way, from this Introduction that the Scout movement owes something to the Arthurian ideal. Baden-Powell in his YARNS FOR BOY SCOUTS TOLD ROUND THE CAMP FIRE (1909) included retellings from Malory, and declared 'that Arthur was the real founder of British scouts' who 'should see themselves as modern-day knights seeking the Holy Grail'.

"The old, old Merlin has the deepest wisdom of any on this earth."

Twang! and the arrow sped, quick as light.

ROBIN HOOD uses Louis Rhead's 1912 text which portrays the greenwood hero as the dispossessed son of the Earl of Huntingdon from Locksley, and draws most of his story from well known ballads. Rhead has, however, written three chapters 'of his own imagining, since no authentic account exists of Robin's childhood and youth.' The illustrations are by John Lawrence. Again, the book is worth having for Naomi Lewis's introduction alone but also, of course, Louis Rhead persuasively brings to life the ever resilient and colourful cast of characters. In this version, Robin, Maid Marian, Will Scarlett, Allan-a-Dale, Friar Tuck and the notorious Sheriff of Nottingham live, love, quest and do battle in a twelfth-century setting.

As much as Arthur, Robin has inspired historical exploration and legendary interpretation for generations, from the old.

anonymous balladeers, through mention in Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Keats, to being starred in comics, story-papers, T.V. and film presentations. The essence of both his and Arthur's exploits can be summed up by the closing words of Naomi Lewis's introduction to KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS, for surely Robin Hood, like Arthur, also 'lies somewhere in a hollow hill' always 'waiting to be found'. The clear division between the good and bad in knightly battle, so rarely allowed in life today, is curiously satisfying. As for the Grail... what truly matters is not the finding but the journey, the quest itself... Here are the tales just as readers have met them and marvelled at them through the centuries. You, in turn, can take from them exactly what you will.

CHRONICLE OF THE CINEMA: 100 YEARS OF THE MOVIES (Published by Dorling Kindersley, £29.95). Reviewed by Larry Morley.

Well here it is: the ultimate work of the Cinema. A history that takes us from the birth of the movies to the present day. Almost 1,000 pages in length it explores every aspect of film. The great foreign films, the silent period, the coming of sound, the various presentation of film, 3D, cinemascope, vista vision, etc. It is lavishly illustrated, with over 2,000 pictures. The section dedicated to posters is almost worth the cost of the book alone.

I have almost a hundred books dealing with the movies but this will take pride of place in my collection.

To quote from an old 1930's song: "It's terrific, stupendous, colossal, the greatest movie film book of the year"!

Definitely a coffee-table book, don't attempt to put it on your bookshelf, the weight of it would bring half your wall down!

So if you can afford it, treat yourself. It's worth every penny. Contributors to this magnificent book include Clive Hirschorne, Ronald Bergan, and Alexander Walker.

I would advise C.D. readers to purchase the book as soon as possible; it is only a limited edition and I would imagine it being a collectors' item in a couple of years time.

* *

FORUM

RAY HOPKINS (Oadby): The British Museum (I must get used to calling them British Library) Catalogues come in four series by date. (1) Old to 1955, (2) 1956 to 1965, (3) 1966 to 1970 and (4) 1971 to 1975. Later than that date they are I think available in loose-leaf but I never refer to those because I inevitably want to look up someone who was published in my GBB readings. So, out of curiosity, and based upon knowledge gained from Bill Lofts' most interesting article on Hilary King, I looked up Grierson Dickson (the James is omitted in the Cats) to find that, from 1935 to 1950 he has seven titles pub. by Hutchinson and in 1958 one by Robert Hale. Under the other name mentioned by Bill, who may or may not be Dickson, Hugh Desmond, there are no less than 45 titles pub. by Wright and Brown: 29 between 1956-65; 4 between 1966-70 and none in the 1971-75. The Hugh Desmond entries do not indicate that this name is a pseudonym. The Cats. are usually good at giving this information but, as Bill indicates Wright and Brown authors are completely unknown, and perhaps did not wish to give this information to the Catalogue compilers, which is a disappointment to our indefatigable researchers such as Bill. There were no entries under the Hilary King name, so no hardbacks were ever published under this name.

Referring to Bill Lofts' answer to my previous Reg Kirkham excerpt in FORUM, I had wondered in the past, and only due to the use of the name Hilary (as in King and Marlow) whether Mr. King may not have been Reg Kirkham, especially after we learned that Reg later became Isobel Norton, chronicler of the Valerie Drew detective adventures. But I threw the idea out in my belief that Kirkham had died during the war. However, I had a resurgence of the idea when I read that Kirkham was still alive until Feb 1956, however, it was only a quick wonder as Bill had informed earlier in the August issue that King was actually Grierson Dickson. I was sorry to hear that Reg Kirkham was only 59 when he died and was in fact still alive when I joined the OBBC, and could have been contactable for first hand information from himself!

How full of interest the good old SPCD continues to be. No wonder we all wait for it with keenness every month.

MARION WATERS (Wellingborough): We were greatly interested in the comments by Margery Woods on the character 'Jill Crusoe' from 1950s *School Friend*. Jill is almost forgotten nowadays, but both Stewart Pride and Evelyn Flinders have told me that, for most of the 1950s, Jill was the most popular character in the weekly, being especially popular with the younger readers. It is worth mentioning that in 1950 when the post-war version of *School Friend* first appeared, very few people owned a television set. The 'box' did not really become popular until the time of the Coronation in 1953.

REG HARDINGE (Wimbledon): In response to the query raised by D. Withers (FORUM C.D. July 1995) I would say that the creator of 'Sporting Sam' was Reg Wootton who first started drawing for the SUNDAY EXPRESS in 1931. It was in 1933 that 'Sporting Sam' made his first appearance, and the strip ran in the paper for well over forty years, regularly. Sadly, Reg Wootton's death at the age of 86 was announced towards the end of April this year. His sharp wit, cleverly displayed in his cartoons, brought much merriment to many readers.

JOHN LEWIS (Uttoxeter): Mr. Baldock's article NEW LIGHT ON MR QUELCH (C.D. no. 584) was most interesting. I too was amazed to learn, in MAGNET no. 46, that the Remove Form Master enjoyed puffing on a pipe, viz. *'Mr. Quelch smoked a pipe himself...'*. That the revelation is repeated in no. 427 is intriguing, but really cannot be considered as firm evidence, in that this issue was a sub-story. However it must have been

for only a few years that Mr. Quelch indulged in tobacco, as in no. 494 he flatly stated *'I do not smoke, thank you.'*

CHRIS BRETTELL (Rowley Regis): We've been on the Norwegian Cruise Line ship M.S. Windward, and one of the cocktails (non-alcoholic) was a 'Billy Bunter'.

The recipe is 'Fresh banana and orange juice, cream, a dash of grenadine blended to a smooth pink colour.

Does that sound like our Bunter? I didn't taste one - sounded too sweet for me.

ERNEST HOLMAN (Leigh-on-Sea): I was interested in Darrell Swift's reference to the Chapman sketches in BACKING UP BILLY BUNTER. This return of Chapman to the Greyfriars scene was a very mixed bag indeed.

The coloured frontispiece would have seemed more reminiscent of Anthony Buckeridge's JENNINGS stories. As for the scene when the juniors are lined up in the Head's study, with Sir Hilton Popper, there would be a definite pointer to the fact that the Public Schools of the Companion Papers DID have a First Form!

Mr. Quelch in the dormitory sketch, when Vernon-Smith arrives back from 'Out of Bounds', had much more of the appearance of a Senior Civil Servant or a Family Lawyer. As for poor Smithy, he is portrayed as a young thug!

However, the scene with Smithy and Bunter on the river bank was much more like the old Chapman. Above all, his portrayal of Bunter with his father might well have been taken from a vintage Magnet.

As Darrell says, Chapman did use the caricature pose, although one could always pick out a particular junior in most of Chapman's work - which was never so with the later Shields. The statuesque attitudes of many of Chapman's people always seemed unlikely but, in fairness, some of the cricket shots of many games did show the players in a Chapmanesque attitude!

* *

LES ROWLEY WRITES:

I have become friends with a lovely couple of fellow-tenants. He is rather fragile from the treatment he received as a prisoner of war of the Japanese and his wife is devoted to make life as pleasant as she can for him. They have a daughter whose birthday was in the offing, and asked what she would like as a present. The daughter mentioned a past delight they had all once shared... the flower-fairy pictures of CICELY MARY BARKER. Unbeknown to each other, both parents asked me if I could tell them anything about the author and any suitable publication. So I flagged your review in the August number of the Digest and passed it to them - with the knowing smirk of a magician producing a white rabbit from a top hat. I have just received my CD back with the following note attached:

'Dear Leslie, thank you for the loan of this wonderful little book. It has been a great help and we shall be ordering a copy from W.H. Smith, knowing full well the happiness it will bring our daughter - and both of us.'

A 'wonderful coincidence'? Here is a little twist. Sometime ago, this same couple were telling me of the enjoyment they had shared by taking the same daughter at an earlier age to see 'WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS' and they

asked me if I knew the play that Italia Conti produced. I smiled knowingly, excused myself, and returned with the then current CD containing the article by Brian Doyle. Brian may remember my mentioning it to him at the time. I thought you might find this little story interesting.

* *

MORE ON THE 'HORNER' PUBLICATIONS

by Bill Lofts

I was greatly interested in the August C.D. and its article by Ernest Holman on the 'Horners Weekly'. True that the paper was an adult or family paper, but many children used to see their parents reading and liked even just to look at the pictures! Consequently it brings back happy memories - which is what our hobby is mainly about. Sunday Circle, for instance, used to have a comic panel featuring two delightful elephants named Billy and Dolly Jumbo. They impressed a collector so much that he in time started to collect all the Victorian comics. By 1960 he had one of the finest collections in the World. The name of Horner (German) was actually taken from the owner of the company, Mr. W.B. Horner, who in 1888 launched 'Horners Penny Stories'. He had offices in Farrington Street, curiously, and possibly on the same site where the future Fleetway House was to be built. The publication proved so popular that others followed, such as Horners Penny Library, Horners Pansy Library, and Horners Pocket Library. As far as it is known, only woman's fiction, and no boys/girls, or comic material.

In time Lord Northcliffe's attention was brought to these best sellers, and consequently he took over the firm, apparently with the stipulation that the name of 'Horner' should always be included in the title. This was probably round 1907 when advertisements of the 'Daily Mail' appeared in the original Horner publications.

Horners Weekly finished in 1918 and went into Horners Penny Stories, paper shortage being the cause, the 'Penny' in the latter being dropped when the paper increased in price. Believe it or not, it went right through to the 3rd week in May 1940 when, like so many papers, it ceased through paper shortage, after an enormous run of 52 years. Certainly the original Mr. W.B. Horner had his wish fulfilled, with his name to the fore with millions of readers.

* *

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Pamela Brown. **Family Playbill**. 1st ed. London, 1951. Illus. by Marcia Lane Foster. VG in G dw. £9.50

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Derek McCulloch, ed. **Uncle Mac's Children's Hour Story Book**. Pub. Sampson Low, n.p., n.d. (c1946/7). First story: "The Creaky Caravan". Bottom of spine pulled, edges of boards rubbed & corners worn. Internally VG £5.50

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John Masefield. **The Midnight Folk: A Novel**. Illus. by Rowland Hilder. 4to., New York, 1932. 6 full page illus. in colour with tissue guards and several black & white drawings. Decorated end-papers cracked at joints. pp. 111-114 are loose, the fold showing that they were not bound in originally. Some pages carelessly cut open but no loss of text. G £30.00

Johanna Spyri. **Heidi**. ***Illus. by Maud & Miska Petersham.*** New York, Garden City, 1932. Decorated spine and front cover. VG £20.00

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