

# THE COLLECTORS DIGEST

JULY 1947  
Next Issue  
August 1947

Vol. 1: No. 7.  
Price 1s. 1d.  
Post Free





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JULY 1947Next Issue: August 1947Editor Miscellaneous Section:

Herbert Leckenby, Telephone Exchange,  
C/o. Central Registry, Northern Command, York.

FROM MY CO-EDITORS' CHAIR:

Yes indeed, my chat this month is being prepared under very different circumstances to those which usually prevail. Instead of discussing matters by correspondence and over 300 miles of wire, we have, this Sunday afternoon of 15th June, been chatting from a couple of chairs in the same room. Two years ago we exchanged letters, "Dear Sir", since when we have penned hundreds of others which rapidly grew in cordiality. Yet a week ago we would have met face to face in the street and known it not. That can never be said again, for, 24 hours ago we met at Cardiff station and exchanged a hearty hand-clasp. It was a great and thrilling occasion. Within 5 minutes we were talking shop and probably will go on doing so throughout the coming week, and some of the things we shall have said will appear in later pages.

One of the subjects which will occupy a good deal of our thoughts is the "Annual". We think we can say in all modesty that this is something which is going to please all subscribers. Since we, or rather my colleague, first thought of this idea, all sorts of possibilities undreamt of have developed. For this we have to thank in no small measure, our good friends at the duplicating agency. They take a great, unselfish interest in our little magazine and are always coming along with suggestions. We were proud of our No.1, but when it is compared with the sixth of the series I think it will be agreed that great progress has been made.

Congratulations have poured in since that No.6 was sent out. Robert Whiter's latest is universally voted to be "his best of all" and the prompt reproduction of that certain telegram and press report has caused a good deal of surprised comment as to how it was done. There was certainly a touch of drama about it all.

It occurs to us that some of you may like to have the address of the people who turn out the C.D. for us. Well, here it is: Wood's Typewriting Office, 20, Stonegate, York.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Single copies 1s.1d post free. Three copies 3s.3d post free. Six copies 6s.6d post free. Postal Orders to be made payable to H. Leckenby at York, un-crossed.

#### ADVERTISEMENT RATES:

Small advertisements 1d per word (name and address inserted free of charge).

WANTED: Bound volumes of early Magnets; also loose Magnets, between 1908 and 1929. Good prices paid for good material. Eric Payne, 23, Grove Road, Surbiton.

Eric Payne, who gave us that fine "write up" on Pierre Quiroule for "Blakiana", now steps into the Miscellaneous Section with something to get the "Gem" group in particular, thinking. It bears the provocative title:-

"THE CIRCULATION MYSTERY"

by Eric Payne

For several years after the birth of the Royal Family of Boys' Papers, - the Gem and the Magnet - the circulation of the Gem was almost double that of the Magnet. The Gem, in the years between 1907 and 1914 was the most prosperous of all the numerous papers for boys which the publishers put out from their premises in Bouverie Street. The Magnet just paid its way, but that was all. It was completely outshone by the brilliance of its elder brother.

Then, as the first Great War dragged on its weary way, the Magnet gradually caught up with and passed the Gem. It took a mighty lead in the circulation field, which it kept right until the finish. The Gem first found "heavy going" in the last two years of the war. It reduced the lead of the Magnet to a certain extent in the period 1924-1927, but between 1929 and 1932 the circulation fell away perilously. In 1933-4 it went ahead again, and settled down to a fairly comfortable circulation until the end.

Why, then, did the Gem take the lead in the early years? Why did the Magnet win the lead eventually, and keep it? The same writer, Charles Hamilton, had created both schools, and wrote the greater proportion of the stories in both papers. Yet the Magnet, apart from a brief period in 1916-11 when the circulation fell almost to danger point, always flourished, while the Gem, at different times during its career, was weighed in the circulation balance, and found wanting at the Fleetway House. WHY?

True, the Gem was first in the field, and had a large circulation when the Magnet was born, which accounts for its lead in early days. Some say the reason is to be found in the fact that Charles Ham-

ilton wrote more Magnet tales than Gem - but that does not apply, for at the time when the Gem began to lose the lead, he was writing regularly for both papers. The real reason goes deeper than that.

In my opinion the reason for the Magnet's lead over the Gem was definitely a psychological one. The backbone of the circulation of both papers was composed of idealists - those who stuck to their favourite characters year after year, and who almost imagined those characters as really existing. It was those idealists who complained bitterly of the "sub" writers, chiefly because the "subs" handled the characters in a different manner from the master. The rank and file did not know their St. Jim's and Greyfriars well enough to know any difference - but the backbone did. The idealists were grimly conservative. That is why some of the sub-writers, who were admittedly first-class in their own sphere, failed lamentably in their work in the Gem and the Magnet.

The Gem lost its big circulation because its characters were mishandled. Even the maestro cannot escape all blame for this fact, though I am assured that he was acting under the direction of his Editors.

The Greyfriars characters were handled far more consistently than those of St. Jim's. Again, the St. Jim's stage was allowed to become far too crowded. The same mistake was not made with the Magnet. Though far too many newcomers were introduced in the years between 1916 and 1919, they were later dropped from the stories. Between 1927 and 1940, though many fine characters came along and lived their day, Lankestar, Crum, Valentine, Warren, Car-boy, Stacey - they were dropped at the end of the series, and not left to clutter up the scene.

Harry Wharton and Co. were always the central characters, even though the main plot concerned somebody else. From the first to the last, there was little fundamental change in the Co. or Billy Bunter, or the Bounder. The limelight was on them the whole time - and we idealists were satisfied.

The Gem's history was very different. It had its own inimitable characters - particularly Gussy, who was often imitated but never equalled. Some say the Magnet's success was due to Bunter - but Gussy was far more original than Bunter, had he been plugged with the same gusto.

Tom Merry, for the first few years, was 14 years old. a lovable young scamp of a schoolboy, straight as a die, and ready for any prank. As time passed he became 15, and a quieter character. Then in 1917 we find him 16 years old - rather heavy and ponderous - weighed down with responsibilities. Rarely we had a glimpse of the fellow we had loved, usually he was just a name, with little to show any definite character. In 1932, with the re-prints, he became 14 again, then 15, and for a very brief time, 16. Then the Amalgamated Press wisely abandoned the re-prints, and put the master on to writing some new stories.

Until about 1913, Tom Merry, as the Gero of the Shell, had been the undisputed chief character in all the yarns, no matter upon whom the plot centered. Then, along came Talbot. The limelight swept away from Tom Merry - and did not go back. Talbot was a fine character for a series, but he was completely overplayed. The first stories by Charles Hamilton on the "Toff" were excellent. But for years and years, the Toff came into the main picture, the old, old plot being re-hashed and re-hashed.

From the beginning St. Jim's had its own outstanding inimitable characters. Tom Merry, the ideal schoolboy leader; Gussy, unsurpassed in any walk of schoolboy fiction, often imitated but never equalled; Simpole, the Socialist; Patty Wynn, a decent and lovable fat boy, unique in fiction; Kerr, the detective; Lowther, the humourist, and so on.

Yet, because Bunter has been a success in the Magnet, Baggy Trimble had to be introduced at St. Jim's - a feeble imitation, and, like all feeble imitations, a mistake. Then, because Coker was a success at Greyfriars, Grundy came to St. Jim's.

Another mistake. So the limelight left the characters whom we had loved for so long, and centered for years on these newcomers.

Because the Bounder had reformed, Levison had to reform too. But Levison's reform was too complete to be convincing. The coward, liar, and thief, now became a hero overnight. To replace Levison, Racke was introduced. Racke was just the villain of the piece - nothing more. That he could have stayed many weeks at any well-run school was unbelievable. Very different from the sly but clever Skinner.

Racke, Chowle, Scrope, Piggott were just unpleasant names for unpleasant people. Nothing more.

Even the picture of Cousin Ethel was inconsistent. In early days we find her, with her school-days finished, and, from this fact, presumably about 17. Then she went to St. Freda's in the Gem serial. After the serial ended, we found her for many years as the young lady with her schooldays behind her, until she joined Spalding Hall, in that very tragic period of Gem history, between 1929 and 1932.

I remember, in 1930, telling the Gem editor that in my opinion the Gem suffered from the inconsistent handling of its characters. He replied "My dear chap, you are thinking of the series as a whole, and you just can't do that." He was wrong. The success of the Magnet was due to the fact that its series made a whole. The semi-failure of the Gem was that its series did not make a whole.

I would go so far as to suggest that the introduction of Warwick Reynolds as regular artist for the Gem struck a blow at its circulation. In the Magnet, Chapman carried blithely on, but Reynolds, excellent artist of nature work as he undoubtedly was, could not draw attractive boys. Too often, his work was grotesque.

With the re-printing of the early stories, which commenced in 1932 and for which I can take some credit, the circulation of the Gem took a big upward trend, and I felt sure it would. As time went on, however, the powers-that-be felt that the old



yarns by themselves were not strong enough, at that time of day, to hold the circulation together - a mistaken view, I think. The old blue-cover Gems had consisted of 32 pages of small print, with few illustrations. The Gem of 1934 had 28 pages, many illustrations, and larger print, and the editor had to cram in one of the re-prints, with, perhaps two other stories. It meant drastic abridgment - and often the abridging was not very scientifically done.

We can note that when Charles Hamilton started writing new St. Jim's stories for the Gem, in the last year of its life, he centered his plots round the characters which had made the Gem famous so many years before - Tom Merry, Fatty Wynn, and Gussy. The extraneous characters which had taken the limelight from our heroes for too long were dropped, just as he had dropped the overweight at Greyfriars in 1927. I believe that had the Gem's career not been so tragically and abruptly terminated by the war in 1939, he would have built up a new glamour for Tom Merry and Co, and St. Jim's would once again have rivalled Greyfriars for the lead in the circulation field.

WOULD EXCHANGE Magnets Nos.168, 178, 195, 317, 419, 420, 433, and Gem 404 for S.O.Libs. Nos.27, 48, 68, 70, 136 and 188. WANTED: Early Magnets, S.O.Libs. 47, 79, 178, 181, 183, 192. H.Machin, 38 St.Thomas Road, Moor Park, Preston, Lancs.

WANTED: Aldine Publications, Turpins, Duvals, etc. Landy, 4 Nuneaton Road, Dagenham, Essex.

WANTED: Early Magnets, Gems, Plucks; would buy or exchange. 5/- each offered for Plucks containing St. Jim's stories, and Gems Nos.16 & 22. John R. Shaw, 4 Brunswick Park, Camberwell, London, S.E.5.

WANTED: Magnets complete with covers, Nos.100-300 and 800-1090. Good prices. W.H.Neate, "Wenlock", Burnham, Bucks.

In our last issue you read about some of the authors and artists who helped to make "The Champion" a successful boys weekly. Here is the second instalment of the reminiscences of that paper's first editor. We are sure you will find it of great interest.

PERSONALITIES OF THE PAST - PART TWO

by F. Addington Symonds

5. Leslie Beresford:

A keen, serious minded man, who listened very attentively to the Editor's remarks when discussing stories and gave the impression that he regarded his commissions as matters of great importance to be carried out with meticulous care. Turned in his stuff regularly and efficiently and was very easy to work with. A man with ideas which frequently bubbled over and had to be sorted out. His best story for "The Champion" was "The War of Revenge".

6. Sidney and Francis Warwick:

Father and son. We dealt chiefly with the father, Sidney Warwick, a real gentleman of the "old school" quiet, dignified, charming in the extreme. Very like A.C. Marshall in personality. A careful conscientious worker, whose MSS were invariably so cleanly typed and so beautifully composed that it was hardly ever necessary to sub-edit them. His outstanding characteristic was his old world courtesy which made it always such a pleasure to converse with him. A man with a strict outlook on life but obviously happy, especially in his family life. He had two very gifted sons and a charming wife and his home was redolent of the best of the Victorian tradition, quiet, friendly, dignified. One of the Editor's most valued friends.

7. Arthur S. Hardy:

One of the "old brigade" - a real "professional" who knew his job inside out. You asked him for - say a football story, and you never bothered to mention the plot or construction. He'd just not and say "I know; Can do. Monday Week"? And the thing would be

on the Editor's desk, strictly according to specification. Competent, conscientious work if a little conventional. Typing not above criticism but at least readable!

8. Coutts Brisbane: (Reid Whitley and various other pen names):

Big, jovial, happy-go-lucky, a man with some extraordinary ideas for stories, especially in the realm of fantastic fiction. The merest sketch of an idea from the Editor was enough to produce an elaborately worked out yarn, full of excitement and surprises. His fund of ideas seemed perpetual and he was an indefatigable worker.

Editor's Note: Of recent years Coutts Brisbane has made quite a name for himself in the field of Science Fiction. As recently as 1941 he wrote a successful story of interplanetary travel "Law of the Universe" which appeared in the British Science Fiction magazine "Tales of Wonder" (Worlds Work - 1/-). We have just learned that he has been approached to write similar stories for the new magazine "Fantasy" but apparently has now retired from the authors chair.

9. Alfred Edgar:

Tall, keen eyed, incisive in speech, very dependable. Always gave the impression that he knew what he wanted and where he was going; enthusiastic, especially about his own particular line, which was police and thriller fiction. Quietly self-confident, poised, courteous, firm. And a very loyal supporter of the Editor, both officially and privately. One of the few writers who could be depended upon to turn in a story without first submitting a synopsis and whose story could, if necessary, be "passed" for press, with only the most cursory glance. His typescripts were always a pleasure to read, being clean, straight forward, neat and efficient. Very soon after joining the staff he qualified as second-in-command, and was always "in charge" in the absence of the Editor, acting for him in all matters of importance.

Two more brilliant contributions by Mr. F. Addington Symonds will appear in our pages soon. The first of these "How 'The Champion' Started" will appear, if possible, in No.9, and you can believe us that it is well worth looking forward to. The story of his youthful enthusiasm for "The Big Budget" edited by Arthur Brooke and how he reached the "editor's chair" at Fleetway House, makes superb reading.

The second of Mr. Symond's contributions will appear soon afterwards and will interest you tremendously. The title "Some Notes on Editorial Policy". An original article from which many may learn quite a lot!

#### FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Sentiment in Schoolboy Fiction .. ..	.. Tom Armitage
The Shylock of Greyfriars .. ..	.. Roger Jenkins
Authors & Artists I Disliked .. ..	.. R.A.H. Goodyear
Those Were the Days .. ..	.. F.W. Webb
Off the Beaten Track .. ..	.. Roger Jenkins
Masters of Greyfriars.. ..	.. T.W. Puckrin
These We Loved in the Old Days .. ..	.. Frank Osborn
Tim Pippin and Giantland .. ..	.. F.W. Wearing
Purple Periods .. ..	.. Tom Armitage
Old Boys' Books .. ..	.. Geo. C. Foster
Amalgamated Press Artists .. ..	.. .. Nemo

**WANTED:** Early issues of Gem, Magnet, Pluck, Dreadnought; early 1914 & 1925. Eric Payne, 23 Grove Road, Surbiton.

**WANTED:** 3d Garfield Libs., Vanguard 1907-8, Black Highwayman, Nos. 71 to 83. C.W. Daniel, 268 Tomswood Hill, Ilford, Essex.

WHY NOT ADVERTISE

For Rates

See Page 178

YOUR EDITORS' TALKING

*Just*  
 (First a few of the things that were said when  
 Yorkshire met Glamorgan.)

H.B. Bond: Well, about the collectors' list. This seems to be a very popular idea for the Annual.

H. Leckenby: Yes, and details are already coming in nicely. Some of the records of collections make very interesting reading indeed. If everyone will play up and send their lists along it should be an invaluable feature. One can think of several reasons why. Here's one for instance: Supposing a collector for some reason has to dispose of his collection. A list such as we hope to have would help him greatly. He would know exactly to whom to offer them.

B. That's so. And here's another point. I've heard of several instances where a collector has left a nice little collection behind him on being called up, and found that the papers had all disappeared on his return. Someone, not realising their appeal or value, having handed them out for salvage. That is bad enough, but one can think of something more regrettable. Supposing a collector dies, for even good collectors die, even though the hobby seems to create a lot of Peter Pans, and those who are responsible for winding up his affairs are unaware that "Magnets", "Gems", "Union Jacks", etc., are worth many times their original value these days.

L. Yes indeed, Maurice, you've got something there, for it's a matter which has given me, personally, much food for thought. If I had to pass to the Elysian Fields I have a fear that my collection might meet with a fate like that. It's a modest collection compared with some I know of, yet it does contain quite a number of items others might like to possess. Yet the chances are some of it might be handed over to lads who would say "Poo! What funny papers. I don't think much to 'em. I'd rather have the "Knockout" or the "Hotspur". Or a good deal of it might go into the salvage bin even. Yet disposed of judiciously it would bring in a useful sum

to someone I left behind, and at the same time be welcomed by other collectors. Fortunately that is not so likely to happen now as it would have been if I had passed on some time ago.

B. Well, let's hope such an event won't happen for a long time to come. Still, it is an important point, and if I was the first to go, well perhaps I could leave it to you to see my Blakes went to those who would most appreciate them.

L. O.K. And now, seeing I'm on holiday we'll change the subject shall we? What about the size? We've the choice of two. One, that of our monthly C.D., and the other about the size of a "Magnet" - perhaps a little wider.

B. I think I favour the latter for the Annual. It has lots of advantages now that we have got the opportunity to reproduce illustrations.

L. So do I. And talking of reproducing, what do you think to this? It's a proof of the title heading, and an illustration from the very first St. Jim's story "Jack Blake at St. Jim's" which appeared in "Pluck", November 11th, 1906. I had it prepared the night before I left York.

B. My word! That's great, hasn't it come out splendidly? That's going to interest the Hamilton group no end - and others too.

L. Right then, that's the size settled, and I think there will be about 60 pages of it. Now what else is there? Oh yes, Roger Jenkins is working on a grand idea - a key list to the "Magnet" and "Gem" stories in the "Schoolboy's Own Library". It's causing him a lot of research but he doesn't seem to mind. And John Shaw is giving him a valuable helping hand.

B. Jolly good. Just the sort of thing we want.

L. Then there's the start-stop list of boys' weeklies over 100 years or so. Shall have to get busy on that for I should like to have it as nearly as complete as possible. Only the other day I came across some adverts. for a "Jacks Paper" started by Pear-

sons in 1922. I've got the starting date but I haven't the slightest idea how long it ran. I don't think it was very long.

B. Perhaps someone can help before we go to press. Anyway a century of papers! Plenty of facts and figures there. What else?

L. Oh, there's lots of ideas. Seems to me it will be the same old trouble, what to put in and what to leave out. Anyway, we hope to have reproductions of the covers of several No.1 issues, a selection of titled of the real old "bloods", important changes in the lives of the more famous papers such as the passing of thr orange and blue covers of the "Magnet" and "Gem", and re-call some of the once popular detectives, Royston Gower, Frank Ferrett, John Smith, Stanley Dare. Even if they never became as famous as the chap you know and think so much about they will be remembered by many of the older members of the clan. And ho, that reminds me. One staunch Blake fan suggested some particulars of stories of that detective which had appeared in papers other than those most closely associated with his name.

B. That's a good idea.

L. Um, yes. I thought you'd say that, being you. But I agree it is a good idea. It will require a lot of research though, "Boy's Friend", "Realm", "Herald", "Dreadnought", "Boys' Journal" and the others.

B. Never mind, there's no doubt it would make an interesting feature. There were quite a number of original stories in the early B.F.L. alone. And maybe some of the older members of the Sexton Blake Club can supply some data. What's that? Oh, O.K. Margaret - - - there's the wife calling us in to supper.

**WANTED:** A Sexton Blake Bust. Any reasonable price paid. V.A.Baxendale, 1 Vincent Street, Openshaw, Manchester, 11.

LETTER BOX

The latest from Frank Richards. An issue of the C.D. would not be complete without one of Mr. Frank Richards' cheery letters. It will be noted that those eagerly awaiting his Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School, must be patient a little longer. But meanwhile there will be Topham and St. Olave's stories, and there's welcome news for 'Gemites'.

(H.L.)

13th June, 1947.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for the new Digest - interesting from cover to cover. The front cover is a gem, and the contents attract like a magnet!

I pick up quite a lot of interesting information from the articles, about Harcourt Burrage especially. More years ago than I want to remember I was one of his 'constant readers'. I wonder how many other old readers of "Ching-Ching" are still going strong! The mention of Pearsons "Big Budget" is interesting too. I remember that I used to write some short stories for that paper early in the present century, though I have quite forgotten them now, even the titles. A very agreeable chap named Wentworth James was editor at that time, and I used to see him at the office in Maiden Lane. Later he left and began a paper of his own called the "Glean" for which also I did a few things; though these also are hard to remember now.

"Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School" seems now definitely scheduled for August. When the next volume will appear is on the knees of the gods! But more numbers of "Topham" and "St. Olive's" are about to descend on the bookstalls. I begin to wonder whether the paper shortage has settled down as a permanent institution. Still, one musn't grouse: there are much more serious shortages than that, and one must be thankful for small mercies.

Many thanks for your kind opinion of my rather exotic Cross-word Book in a variety of languages.



the publisher is now pondering over it - apparently with one eye on the public and the other on the paper problem. In the meantime, I am keeping busy with Tom Merry, Figgins, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and between this, and the lovely summer weather, just enjoying life.

With kind regards,  
Yours sincerely,  
Frank Richards.

:: :: ::

New Zealand also defends St. Franks

by J.R.Murtagh

Yes, Mr. Roger Jenkins, your unkind and uncalled for remarks about E.S. Brooks and St. Franks have stirred up trouble even in this far corner of the world, and the fact that this article has been flown 12,000 miles should go to show how world wide the popularity of that great school is. Mr. Jenkins says he is surprised that some people prefer the work of Brooks to that of Charles Hamilton. Well, maybe he'll be speechless with amazement when he finds there are other people in far off New Zealand who prefer the former. Hamilton is great, but with me Brooks comes first. Far from lacking realism, his characters, to my mind, actually live, and I find it hard to believe they are all a myth. Mr. Jenkins also says that Brooks went to fantastic lengths to arouse interest. The St. Franks juniors did NOT visit hidden worlds every vacation for, amongst other places they went to China, The U.S.A., the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, the Wild West. One of the hidden worlds visited, namely Northentria, was quite feasibly explained by volcanic action. Obviously Mr. Jenkins lacks imagination and can be put with that class of person who laughed at the stories of Jules Verne.

No doubt by the time this appears in print Mr. Jenkins will have been told off to a standstill by some of the English readers for his suggestion that St. Franks is a copy of St. Jims and Greyfriars. Even

Mr. Hamilton would deny this. Mr. Brook's characters had totally different personalities. There had to be a school with good and bad characters therein, and there the similarity ends. If the St. Franks stories were not a success why did they run for 18 years (25 years counting reprints)? Moreover, I understand that Mr. Brooks wrote EVERY St. Franks story that appeared in the N. L. L. This is a pretty good record for this author who had a style of his own that one could pick out immediately. Some of his characters such as Archie Glenthorne, Wm. Napoleon Browne, Handforth, Fullwood, the Trotwood Twins, Timothy Tucker, Clarence Fellowe, Tommy Watson and Reggie Pitt, were outstanding personalities at St. Franks and differed entirely from those of other authors. I quite respect the opinions of those who like Mr. Hamilton's stories better but assert that Mr. Brooks can be rightly proud of his work in the same field.

Mr. Jenkins is hitting below the belt when he accuses Mr. Brooks of plagiarism. It would be a strange world indeed had we all the same tastes. For my part my first love is St. Franks with Greyfriars taking second place and St. Jims third. I think Charles Hamilton is a wonderful writer to feature so many schools and so many characters for so many years, but at the same time take off my hat to Mr. Brooks the creator of St. Franks. His stories have brought happiness into the hearts of countless thousands of boys and girls throughout the world.

I haven't covered all the points in Mr. Jenkins' article, but feel that others will have their say about those I have missed.

FOLLOWING SCHOOLBOYS' OWNS WANTED: Nos. 1, 2, 12, 19, 26, 29, 32, 33, 34, 38, 62, 146, 148, 149, 150, 152, 154, 159, 160, 166, 170, 218, 220, 228, 244, 245, 247, 248, 249, 250, 252, 254, 256, 261, 263, 265, 267. Roger Jenkins, Galpe, Town Hall Road, Havant, Hants.

Advertise in the C.D.

THE SWINDLES EXPOSURES

The exposures of the swindles have, of necessity, occupied a good deal of space in recent issues. We shall not require so much this month, fortunately, and thus find room for more pleasant topics, for we have again decided to make it 32 pages, so much have we in hand. As we were able to briefly announce in No.6 Pearson duly appeared before the Leicester Magistrates Court and was sent to the Quarter Sessions for trial. Under the circumstances it would not, of course, be proper to make any further comment on the case for the time being. We understand that the Quarter Sessions will be held towards the end of July, so we may be able to announce the result of the trial in our August issue (No.8).

As for the man with the many aliases, not a word has been heard of him since Mr. Baguley wrote him that letter (see G.D.No.6). It seems evident he realises it would be too dangerous to serve up the story of the old oak chest any longer. It has occurred to us, however, that it would be a good idea to give our subscribers a specimen of his handwriting, just in case he did venture to try again with a change of theme, and, of course, another impressive name.

*I have, if you desire them, the following magazines.*

*Schoolboy's Owns, from 1 to 388, consecutive  
 'Gems', from 517 to 1495 consecutive  
 Nelson's, 400 various OLD AND NEW SERIES.  
 Also, I do not know whether you would  
 be interested. I have a number of  
 'Magets', an excellent schoolboy magazine.  
 and companion paper to the 'Gems'.*

And there, for the time being, we leave the subject.

THE C.D. ON THE ALERT AGAIN

Those of you who are interested in the new radio serial "The Daring Dexters" may have noticed that, in the issue of the "Radio Times" dated 6th June, the name of the heroine had been changed in the cast from "Sally" to "Sherry". Would it surprise you if we said that the "Collectors' Digest" had a little to do with that? Well, it was so. You see there happened to be another "Sally Dexter" and she was born first (See C.D.No.5 back page). Moreover, she is the child of the brain of a sturdy supporter and contributor to this magazine. She is the glamorous, captivating wife and assistant of Rex Dimond, whose adventures appear in the breezy quarterly "Wit". When our contributor heard about the other Sally he promptly got in touch with the B.B.C. and asserted his rights. The people of Portland Place gracefully met him half-way and agreed as soon as possible to give their heroine a nickname, "Sherry", and drop the "Sally". So now you know, and we advise you to get acquainted with the original Sally Dexter, you'll like her.



Subscriptions for "WIT" 4s.6d for four issues, should be addressed to BCM/Bizarresque, or 14-16, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4. (Mention C.D. when doing so).

TO HARRY MANNERS FANS: Collection of Kadak Magazines for sale; Greyfriars Annuals 1920 and 1930 required, also various Magnets. Robert H. Whiter, 706, Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London N.22.

ALDINE "DICK TURPIN" TITLES

This item was started in C.D. Vol.1, No.3 on page 73 but, as only 4 titles were given, we are re-inserting them here.

- (1) Driven from Home, or Dick Turpin & Black Bess seek Fame & Fortune. (2) The Masked Man of Mystery, or A Story of Strange Deeds. (3) The Secret of the Old Mint, or Dick rights an old Wrong. (4) The Night-Riders of Bagshot Heath, or 'Mid Friends and Foes. (5) The Fatal Word of Command, or How Dick held the King himself to Ransom. (6) That Rascal Blueskin, or Dick Turpin and his Friends Abroad. (7) The Dark Deeds of Paris, or Dick Comes Out in his True Colours. (8) Dick Turpin's Mark of Vengeance, or The League of the Death's Heads. (9) The Hero of Hounslow Heath, or How Dick Turpin outwitted Jonathan Ridgeway. (10) Stand and Deliver, or How Black Bess treated Dick Turpin to a Mighty Leap. (11) Tom King to the Rescue, or On the Road to Tyburn Tree. (12) Dick Turpin in a Hot Corner, or Hemmed in on all Sides. (13) Take Me Who Dare, or How Dick and his Friends got into some Serious Scrapes. (14) Your Money or your Life, or How Dick took from the Rich to give to the Poor. (15) Hurrah for the Road, or How Dick Turpin turned the Tables on his Enemies. (16) The Mystery of the Lonely Heath, or How Dick Turpin tracked a Monster Down. (17) Turpin's Great Fight for Liberty, or From Dungeon to the King's Highway. (18) Tom King to the Feont, or Great Doings in Surrey and Kent. (19) Dick's Duel to the Death, or The Masked Terrors of Evil-Doers. (20) Ho, for the King's Highway, or The Misfortunes that overtook some Valiant Men. (21) In Desperate Straits, or A Story of Fire and Sword. (22) The Dark River's Secret, or The Man in the Death's Head Mask. (23) Shoulder to Shoulder. (24) He Feared no Foe or Great Adventures in the North. (25) The Tragedy of Shooters Hill, or How Turpin frustrated a Villainous Plot. (26) A Fight to a Finish, or The Mysterious Midnight Messenger. (27) A Traitor's Fate, or Peters and Beetles to the Fore.

The author of our recent successful article on Sweeny Todd. Mr. F. N. Wearing, again returns to the fold, with:-

THE HALFPENNY BOYS LEADER  
AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

Our Editor asks me if I can throw any light on this paper, of which he has acquired a copy. No. 1 was issued by Henry Wells Jackson, 2 Red Lion Court, on Sept. 11th, 1895, 16 pages, size  $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11\frac{1}{4}''$  and ran for 229 numbers when it was incorporated with "The Boys of London & New York" an 8 page newspaper-size paper also published by Jackson for many years from American stories from Touseys "Boys of New York". In the early eighties Jackson had issued a penny "Boys Leader", 8 pages, large size, and the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d issue consisted of the old stories broken down to fit the new size, which must have been a difficult job. Of course the stories were American reprints, and I recollect some of the titles, "Billy the Bootblack" by Harrigan and Hart (a popular song and dance term of the USA. early eighties). "Johnnie Burgoo" by Commodore Ah-look, and "The Boy Pilot of Lake Michigan" by Howard de Vere. Referring to "Boys of London & New York", No. 1 January 7th, 1882, ran till 1899, a good run, which proves there must have been a British Public for the American reprint, and most likely the cause of its death was due to "The Boys of New York" published by Frank Tousey, stopping at No. 1000. Thus no more stories would be available.

I take, from an old scrapbook, an excerpt which was written by an old collector who was an authority on the bygone boys papers:-

"Between 1885 and 1890 it was my good fortune to hold the post of errand boy in a Fleet Street publishing office, and as my pet hobby was reading as many highwayman stories as my pocket would afford it was quite natural that I should take a strong interest in the offices from which they came. It was my custom to always buy copies at the offices themselves, and I must have become pretty well known to some of the men whose names appeal so much

to us in these later days. Charles Fox managed his own business and had but one assistant. He served me many times over the counter of the old Shoe Lane office which I must say was one of the tidiest of them. The old yellow posters with page illustrations from "Turnpike Dick", "Sweeny Todd", and "Ching Ching" delighted me most. The old office of E.J. Brett in Fleet Street was crammed from floor to ceiling with bound volumes, and penny numbers. Wm. Cates trade counter was a very small corner of the works in Bouverie Street. It was furnished with a bookcase showing all the Hogerth House stories which fascinated me. Harrisons, where Black Bess and Blueskin came from, was in a dark corner of Bride Court and the Black Bess numbers were all arranged in little boxes along the wall. S. Dacre Clarke's (Guy Reyner) office at 83 Farrington Street was an interesting place. It was the house in which "Tit Bits" was first issued in London. There Guy Reyner issued the "Boys Popular Weekly". I saw him often in those days and used to wonder if he was the great ventriloquist he was supposed to be. Hendersons, which published "The Young Folks Paper" and many 3d story books, was a well organised concern, which featured the Tin Pippin stories by Richard Quittenton (Roland Quiz). I was the first stranger who went into "Answers" office and paid a 1d for number one. I little thought that Harmsworths activities would put an end to all the wonderful old papers that then seemed to me the most desirable literature in the world. One more office was that of the "Boys of London & New York". Jackson and a boy were all the staff I ever saw there. In the late nineties it was issued from Jackson Printing & Publishing Co., Station Road, Wigan - a bit rural after London.

DON'T LET DOUBLE SUMMER TIME

MAKE YOU FORGET YOUR SUBS.



# BLAKIANA



All Correspondence to  
H.M.Bond, 10, Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

## THE ROUND TABLE

I am sure that you will all be delighted with the fine heading which Mr. Wilfred Darwin has specially drawn for this section of the C.D. Not only does it look very effective, but he has managed to portray a Sexton Blake in the true Eric R. Parker style and may well be proud of his effort for this reason alone. As you are aware, we are experimenting with all types of illustrations by the photostat and I think that as time goes by we shall be able to reproduce many items which will be of great interest to all Blake fans. The possibilities are limitless once we overcome a few small difficulties.

This month I am including another fine Blake Crossword by Mr. Rex Dolphin. This contributor has undoubtedly burned much midnight oil for the sake of Blakiana and I feel sure that you will all agree that he has provided us with a really entertaining item. Many thanks, Rex!

The Round Table feature is, to a certain extent a unique, for it is being written while I am in the company of my Co-Editor, Mr. Herbert Leckenby. As you know, we have jointly produced this magazine while being more than 300 miles apart and this is



the first occasion that we have been able to sit down at the same table and discuss the hobby in general and the C.D. in particular. We had hoped that other members of our circle would be able to visit Cardiff during this week but unfortunately this was not to be. But it has been a very delightful week for both of us and it has been a real pleasure to enjoy the company of one of the real enthusiasts of the hobby. Next month the Round Table will be minus one in actuality, but I like to think that in theory you are all with me, as I am sure you are.

Browsing through some of my collection of Union Jacks for the year 1910 I came across the following which I thought would be of interest to you all:-

"To Pedro":

Noble art thou, O hound of world-wide fame,  
 Sagacious, tender, stern, determined, mild;  
 Pedro! How many thousands love thy name?  
 Fierce as a tiger - gentle as a child!  
 Fierce when the vicious would their crimes pursue,  
 Gentle when Virtue seeks thy dauntless aid;  
 Strong for the weak and quick for the true,  
 Thou dost not recognise the word 'afraid'!  
 An almost human intellect is thine,  
 Canine of lion heart and peerless breed;  
 No frantic fear to thee brings whimpering whine,  
 Thou knowst it not, great dog of daring deed,  
 Heroic creature! All thy praises sing - -  
 Thou art of animals a very king!

Chas. F. Forshaw, LL.D.

This tribute to Blake's famous bloodhound seems rather "flowery" to the modern way of thinking, but it does show, to a very great extent, how very popular the animal was some thirty-six years ago. It would be well if he was as much to the fore in modern Blake stories as he was in those days. As I turn the pages of the Union Jack which featured the above I note that he appears in almost every illustration, and might add that this was the case in almost every issue at that time.

The June 1947 issues of the S.B.L. have arrived as I write this. Once again Lewis Jackson and Anthony Parsons are featured. I wonder why? In No.146 (the Jackson story) it was announced that No.145 was by Rex Hardinge when it actually was by Parsons? Looks as if the A.P. are slipping up!

Cheerio for now,  
H. M. BOND.

Another article for the "modern" collector. One of our most active and enthusiastic young writers presents a pen picture of an author who, it is hoped, will again write for the S.B.L. We feel sure that old and new readers will be interested in these notes about:-

JOHN DRUMMOND

A Sexton Blake Library War-time Discovery

by John Cocher, Jun.

During the war years, several new authors appeared amongst the ranks of the old established favourites in the Sexton Blake Libraries. Chief amongst these, to my mind, anyway, was John Drummond. His name was not unknown for it was this author who created a character who enjoyed great popularity during the final days of the Thriller, namely, the Red Sword, a rather fantastic character but, nevertheless, a colourful and adventurous one. I think I am correct in saying, too, that John Drummond's stories of the Red Sword were reprinted in an American magazine, Popular Detective. This is nothing new for other Sexton Blake authors have had their stories reprinted in similar magazines, Anthony Parsons and Berkeley Grey being only two.

Therefore Drummond was not exactly - unknown writer when he made his debut as a writer of Sexton Blake stories. He had from the start a distinctive style which often reminded me of the manner of the much lamented Gwyn Evans. He seemed to favour bizarre situations and also enjoyed bringing together the main characters at the end of a story for

a startling denouncement. And he managed to do it successfully. His first novel, *The Essex Road Crime* (71) showed great promise but it is always rather a poor idea to chose a policeman as the criminal being a trifle misleading to the reader. His second *The Manor House Menace* (65) was much better, it was more subtle and with better characterisation and he treated Blake more kindly than the majority of present day writers do. *The Tragic Affair of the Stationmaster's Legacy* (80) and *The Riddle of the Leather Bottle* (82) were commonplace mysteries, and he rose to a much higher level with his fifth novel *The Painted Dagger* (86). This had a shrewd, well-thought-out plot which convinced me there and then that John Drummond was a really welcome addition to the ranks of Sexton Blake writers. In this story one could perceive the influence of the Gwyn Evans school of thought.

But his next novel, *The House on the Hills* (91) with its bizarre situations seems to me to have been his best. Here Drummond really let his imagination go to the full extent and the result was one of the best novels pebbed in the Third series to date.

Then, contrary to expectations his final stories were not so good. *Sixty Miles per Hour* (94) showed little inspiration although the plot was quite good and *The Riddle of the Mummy Case* (100) was such a strange badly written novel that one could scarce believe that it had been written by the same man who had created so excellt a novel a few bried months before. The A.P. evidently tired of Drummond or the author tired of his publishers, and since that date he had not appeared in the Library. Why? Surely he was an important discovery. Maybe John Drummond is now working for the Daily Graphic as their New York correspondent, for a writer of that name has recently returbed to the Kemsley Group of newspapers. Was John Drummond of Sexton Blake fame the same man who wrote a best seller entitled *The Bride Wore Black*, which was later a selection of the Book Club? Who can tell?

The A.P. is unnecessarily reticent when concerned with authors these days, although I can remember a time when even papers such as the Triumph and Champion gave details of their writers, Donald Dane, and others being given excellent write-ups.

Maybe the A.P. will give us details of their writers as the years pass by as they did in the 1930's: maybe I shall never learn anything further about John Drummond who shone brightly for a year and then faded into the past with no excuse or apology.

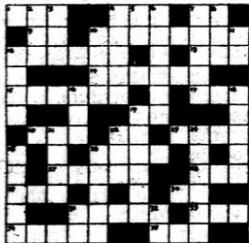
SEXTON BLAKE CROSSWORD No.3:

BY REX DOLPHIN

We have received many letters of congratulation on the first S.B. Crossword which Mr. Dolphin compiled for our No.5, and it is with great pleasure that we now present his second effort in this direction. We think you will find it even more ingenious than the first for it certainly will provide you with a few "teasers".

Clues Across:

1. Tree from Hardy's initials. 4. Cobfederation character with wings. 7. Blake's initials. 9. Reverse the firm which publishes Blake. 10. Middle name of 26 across. 12. Gregory's Christian name. 13. He saw in the dark. 14. Blake often sat for him. 15. In which Blake was born. 17. A Blake fan, no doubt. 19. A Brandon character has suffered a reverse & lost 5/-; 20. used to cost 4d. 22. A Sin by Gwyn Evans. 23. Bird of Paradise, known to Plummer. 26. Much travelled author. 27. Rolling



Stone's real name. 28. Initials of 26 across. 30. Title used by 34 across. 31. A long Christian name. 33. Initials of Waldo's

creator. 34. Alias Prof. Andrew Butterfield. 35. Creation of 24 down.

Clues Down:

2. Grant's profession. 3. Blake's creator (Christian Name). 4. Hackneyed form of Laban. 5. Initials of 24 down. 6. He is as a son to S.B. 7. Wherein we usually meet Blake. 8. Gerald the archer has lost a man. 10. Stanton ----. 11. Initials of 22 down. 12. What Mrs. Bardell and Baker St. mean to Blake. 16. Take the D.A. from one artist to find another. 18. A joint found in a Blake paper. 19. This stone rolled and gave us Granite. 21. Greatest triumph of 14 across. 22. Did Edwy prefer him to Blake? 24. One of the Murrays. 25. Wu Ling was called a yellow one (title of S.B.L.No.1). 26. Walter -----. 31. Reverse initials of Blake's broadcaster. 32. King Karl or Krock Kelk?

ANSWERS TO SEXTON BLAKE QUIZ No.2:

1. Edwy Searles Brooks. 2. Barry. 3. Beaudelaire - French. 4. Dr. Huxton Ryner. 5. An adversary of Sexton Blake - The Spider - H. Gregory Hill. 6. Claudius.

FORTH-COMING ATTRACTIONS IN "BLAKIANA":

The Story of Dr. Satira	..	..	..	..	H.M. Bond
Sexton Blake on Stage, Screen & Radio	..	..	..	..	Rex Dolphin
The House (No.1)	..	..	..	..	H.M. Bond
Portraits of Blake	..	..	..	..	Rex Dolphin

Regular features will include a Quix, the Round Table, etc. etc.

LAUGHING WITH MRS. BARDELLby H.M. Bond

All the older readers of the adventures of Sexton Blake recall, with much pleasure, the great prominence given to the detective's inimitable housekeeper during the latter half of the run of the old "Union Jack". To-day, she is very much forsaken a forsaken character, due, I think, to the inability of the modern Blake author to find a place for her in the "fast-moving" story of to-day, but whenever mention is made of the Baker Street establishment we like to imagine that she is not far away from the famous consulting room. Probably, with more years upon her shoulders, Mrs. Bardell has ceased to give vent to those peculiarities of speech which used to amuse us so much and which undoubtedly did much to popularise the old lady. Her mis-use of the King's English was always a source of great amusement both to Sexton Blake himself and to the reader, and I can recall many really funny remarks she made.

Thanks to such authors as Gwyn Evans and Robert Murray we were introduced to the real Mrs. Bardell as often as possible. If only such was the case to-day; somehow I can't understand why the dear old soul should be so neglected but there it is and we have to put up with her absence from the stories, relying on our old numbers of the U.J. to refresh our memories of her.

Mrs. B. once said that Blake "has a lot of joints in his falour, but is an invertebrate smoker". I wonder if the 1947 budget has affected this statement? Probably the old dame would "have come over all of a trimble like an asperin leaf" had she even dared to imagine such an increase in prices as we have suffered (for she made the statement way back in 1932 - the halcyon days to us - now!).

During my recent imaginary visit to Baker Street I quite expected Mrs. Bardell to say that the detective "couldn't decieve you now, Sir". Probably in

in the words of Blake's housekeeper. the sleuth would have been "on the foam".

I think I did hear her mention that she was dead scared of "the resolvers and autocratic pistols" that her master had in the house.

Her familiarity with modern film stars is an unknown quantity, but she used to be fond of the "flicks" and was once heard to mention that "although Polar Negro had staged a great comeback I am fonder of Phoenix the Cat than of any other fillum star". In more recent times she might have talked about "Snowdwarf and the seven Whites".

Recalling Gwyn Evans' treatment of Mrs.B. I also remember HER treatment of HIS Characters. "Splash" Page was inevitably "Crash" Page and rather than Julius Jones and Co publishing the "Daily Radio" it was, in her words a case of "polishing the Daily Radium". She used to like "the installations of the serials" in that paper by the way.

When Blake (as he often did) emulated Leon Kestrel the Master Mummer and adopted a disguise, his housekeeper eyed him with some degree of admiration and often remarked to her sister-in-law Mary Ann Cluppibb that "Mr.Blake is a fair marble at fake up and despising himself". Blake, I am sure, would rarely despise himself but would probably agree that his make up was just as easily described as a "fake up". He had to smile one day though, for, having disguised himself as a Celestial he overheard Mrs.B say that "he looked wonderful as a Chinese mandoline".

I think, however, that when she told someone that "Mr.B. has had a busy day in his lavatory, doing comical experiments, melting things in cubicles and penetrating the whole house with precocious diplomas" she just about capped all her previous unwitting attempts to twist the King's English. I wonder if, under current conditions, she would talk to Mary Ann Cluppibb about such things as "futility furniture" & "rationalisation of industry"

