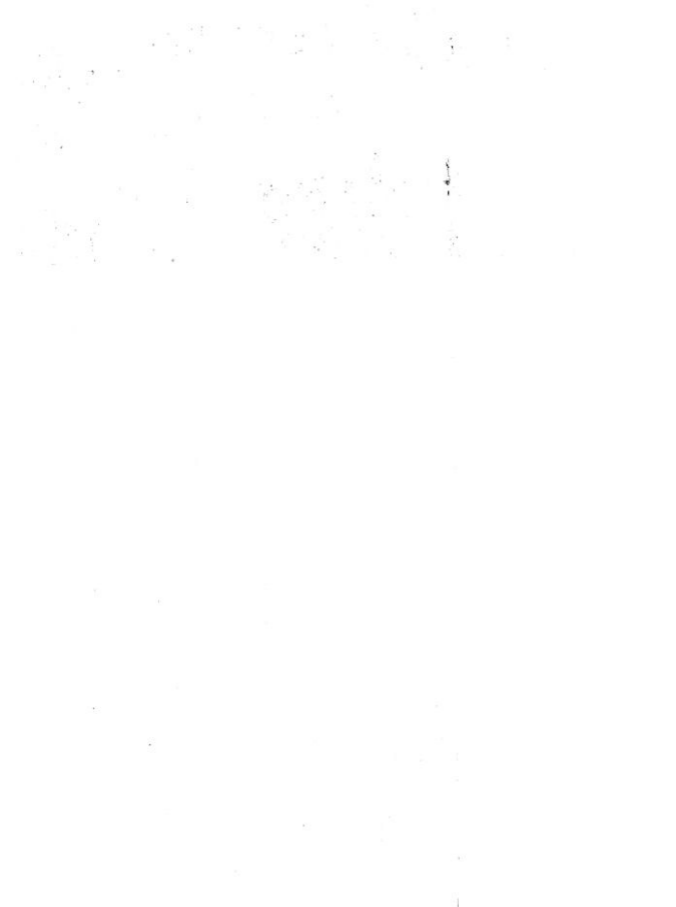


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Aug 147

# THE COLLECTORS DIGEST





# <sup>The</sup> COLLECTORS DIGEST



Vol.1. No.8

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AUGUST 1947

Next Issue : September 1947

Editor Miscellaneous Section:

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

## FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR:

I must start on a melancholy note this month for I have to announce with the deepest regret the death on 10th July of Mr.F.N.Wearing, of Bootle, Liverpool. He had been ill for some time but in a letter to me a few weeks ago he said he felt a good deal better. The news of his death, therefore, came as a great shock.

Mr.Wearing spent some years of his boyhood in the U.S.A. and had lived in the Bootle district ever since his return to this country. He was a great authority on the English "dreadfuls" of the Victorian era. Only a fortnight ago I came across an ad. of his offering papers for sale in a journal of 1901. I had asked him if he remembered it in a letter I sent with his copy of No.7. I am afraid it would arrive about the day of his death.

Mr. Wearing was always willing to help, from his great store of knowledge. I have had reason to be grateful to him on countless occasions. He never failed to reply properly in a neat scholarly hand. His articles were always written in capitals with great care. In the words of Mr. John Medcraft "he was a friendly and courteous gentleman" and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. He was 64 years of age.

: : :

Almost every letter received since the dispatch of No. 7 has had something nice to say about the illustrated headings by Wilfred Darwin, all declaring they add greatly to the appearance of the issue. I cordially agree. In this number another one heads our "Letter Box" feature. Wilfred had also volunteered to do some sketches for the Annual. Needless to say we gratefully say "Go ahead, Wilfred".

: : :

Talking of the Annual we are pleased to say that details of collections are coming along steadily. Already we have received some from overseas, and we have something about the greatest of all English collections - John Medcraft's, of course. This is so impressive that - well, we can't attempt to describe it here. You'll have to wait until you see the Annual. This is going to be a really interesting feature. We want everyone in, no matter how small the collection, for we desire to let all collectors know each other. Give some details, too, of how long you have been collecting your favourites, and any interesting experiences you have had. One Magnetite tells for instance of how not so very long ago he was offered over 200 Magnets for £1 - and the offer was genuine.

You will also see from a notice on another page that we require certain dates for our start-stop list of boys papers. Please help if you can for we wish to make this unique feature as complete and authentic as ever possible.

Those eagerly awaiting the coming of "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School" should not have long to wait now, Meanwhile, be sure and read the remarkable developments concerning the book in our correspondence columns. I am sure you will agree "remarkable" is the word for it.

Yours sincerely,

*H. 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).

AN OLD FRIEND RE-APPEARS

After a lengthy interval the Canadian Mail brought new copies of that artistic little Mag - "The Story Paper Collector". Of necessity, it was thinner than of yore, but it was no less welcome for that. Now that you have got going again, keep it up, Billy.

WANTED: Following numbers Schoolboys Own Library - 6, 28, 36, 48, 60, 68, 76, 84, 94, 124, 128, 132, 138, 142, 146, 150, 154, 158, 166, 174, 182, 220, 268. Any condition. W.H. Thompson, 114, Handley Road, New Whittington, Chesterfield.

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.

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

I have pleasure in presenting still another article from the brilliant pen of Roger Jenkins, who is rapidly becoming one of the foremost authorities on Hamilton lore.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

by R.M.Jenkins

(The School Stories in the 3d Boys' Friend Library)

Collecting stories by Charles Hamilton is rather much like taking drugs - the more you get the more you want. If you are of my generation you start with Magnets and Gems of the last ten years of publication and work your way back through the highways and byways of the variegated works of fiction by this author. You may be lucky enough to get hold of nearly complete sets of Magnets and Gems, and you may then branch off to the weekly Boys' Friends, Plucks, Greyfriars Heralds, Populars and Empires, and the monthly Boys' Friends and Schoolboys' Owns. Unfortunately at this moment the celebrated law of Averages generally makes an appearance, and we find that the scarcest books are often in the greatest demand. Even the Britist Museum, which of all sources should possess a complete set, lacks Magnet No. 1. But apart from this, it had within its hallowed precincts every other story written by Charles Hamilton.

I have always regarded the second decade of this century as the quantitative period in the history of the writing of school stories, and the fourth decade as the most qualitative. Like all generalisations, however, this statement is only a half-truth. Nevertheless, I do feel that in the years 1930-1940 there appeared some of the finest work by Mr. Hamilton, whilst in the years 1910-1920 may be best observed the remarkable fecundity of his genius. It was during these early years that St. Jims, Greyfriars, and Rookwood, together with Highcliffe and Rycombe Grammar School were all the centres of stories written, apparently by five different authors from five different angles\*. Yet the amazing fact

is that all these schools were the creations of one man, and the majority of the stories in which they were featured were also his work.

This period was indeed the heyday of the school story, but such a variety of different schools could not compete against each other indefinitely. First of all, Highcliffe and Rycombe Grammar School dropped out of the scene, to be heard of in the future only as the rivals of St. Jims and Greyfriars respectively. Then Rookwood gave up appearing on the book-stalls weekly, although it made sporadic appearances for some considerable time afterwards in the guise of reprints. More than ten years later, St. Jims gave up the ghost, and a few months after that, Greyfriars was forced to make what has now turned out to be seven years sojourn in exile.

But among the stories of schools that retired from the scene comparatively early, there are a number of notable works. Some appeared in papers that many collectors may be unaware ever received contributions from the pen of Charles Hamilton. Of all these books, few indeed can be scarcer to come by than the Boys' Friend 3d Monthly Library. Yet it was in this series, and in this series only, that before the advent of the Schoolboys' Own Library in 1925, it was possible to obtain additional monthly school stories by Mr. Hamilton, although these made only occasional appearances on the market. Yet they undoubtedly helped to stimulate a desire for a more regular supply, which was gratified in 1925. The early copies contained about 120 pages of close print, and the type extended all across the page. Later, they were printed in two columns, and the number of pages reduced to about 70. Nevertheless, both types probably contained more reading than the

\* Actually there were five schools, but only four pen names were used, Mr. Hamilton writing both the Greyfriars and Highcliffe stories as "Frank Richards".

**WANTED:** Monsters, Nelson Lees. Write J. Cook, 178, Maria Street, Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Schoolboys' Owns that were their successors. A great deal of the stories were merely reprints of earlier ones by Charles Hamilton, like -

- No.235. "The School Under Canvas" by "Prosper Howard".  
 No.367. "Cousin Ethel's Schooldays" by "Martin Clifford".  
 No.413. "The Fued at Rookwood" by "Owen Conquest"  
 No.509. "The Schoolboy Castaways" by "Martin Clifford".  
 No.513. "On the Warpath" by "Frank Richards".  
 No.517. "Under Sealed Orders" by "Martin Clifford".

These were reprinted from the Gem, Empire, Boys' Friend <sup>1st</sup>, Gem, Magnet, and Gem Libraries respectively. On the other hand, a few were reprints of stories by hack writers, like -

- No.153. "The Silent Three" by "Martin Clifford".

which also appeared originally in the Gem library. But there were other tales by hack writers which were not reprints, like these two Greyfriars yarns -

- No.319. "School and Sport" by "Frank Richards".  
 No.489. "Football Champions" by "Frank Richards".

which made their only appearance in print - in this series. In this connection, it is curious to note that the number of imitators who used to retail lists of sporting events under the impression that they were supplying a Greyfriars or St. Jims story with a genuine air. But imitators had other habits of an ethically questionable nature. Another was to take an original story by Charles Hamilton, and alter many passages of it, as was done to -

- No.276. "Through Thick and Thin" by "Martin Clifford".

which was probably adapted from an unpublished story by Mr. Hamilton. Discerning readers will note that some parts must have been wholly retained, whilst others were altered and incidents related in a manner very different from the style used by the master



himself. It is useless to speculate why such things were not only countenanced but encouraged by the Amalgamated Press. But it is interesting to note that this was not an isolated example of journalistic perfidy. For instance -

Magnet No.67. "Harry Wharton's Ward"

was written by Charles Hamilton, and describes how Wharton found a baby. Yet -

Magnet No.652. "Billy Bunter's Baby"

was an adaptation of the previous Magnet story, and was altered by a substitute writer. As in the case of St.Jims story described above, whole passages are retained, and the effect is to give the observant reader a headache in attempting to establish the identity of the author. But in the case of the Greyfriars tale, we have the original with which to compare it, and this gives us the key to the problem of some other stories which seem to contain a multiplicity of styles.

Finally, in our classification of the school tales in the Boys' Friend 3d Library, we come to the stories by Mr.Hamilton which made their one and only appearance in this series. These include -

No.30. "Tom Merry & Co." by "Martin Clifford".

No.38. "Tom Merry's Conquest" by "Martin Clifford".

No.288."The Boy Without a Name" by "Frank Richards".

No.328."Rivals and Chums" by "Frank Richards".

No.383."After Lights Out" by "Martin Clifford".

These five stories may be said to constitute the rarest stories by Charles Hamilton, since they appeared in no other form, and naturally the circulation of this series was far below that of the Gem and Magnet (in which, of course, there were hundreds of stories that were never reprinted. But individual copies of the weekly papers are far more common than these monthly ones). In view of the scarcity of these stories, then, Charles Hamilton fans may be surprised to learn that No.288 "The Boy Without a

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Name" he considered to be his finest work. It is not a Greyfriars story, strangely enough, but a Highcliffe one, and deals with the arrival at that school of Arthur Clare who subsequently turns out to be Courtenay. The description of Ponsonby & Co's. objections to the arrival of a scholarship boy from the working class is admirably done and the way in which his friendship with de Courcy, the Caterpillar, is started is described in a masterly manner. Possibly the only objection to the tale is the exaggerated snobbishness of Ponsonby, which seems a little artificial these days. Still, it should be borne in mind that this story was published on New Years Day, 1915. Ponsonby later modified his attitude with the passing of time.

It is amusing to note how the contemporary Magnets deal with the situation.

Magnet No. 344. "Ructions at Highcliffe", which appeared in September 1914, before the Boys' Friend story, deals with the arrival at Highcliffe of Clare in quite a different manner. In the Magnet version, Clare is knocked down by a car containing Ponsonby and his "nutty" friends. Harry Wharton takes him to the doctor, and later Squiff, a recent arrival at Greyfriars and thus not known to Ponsonby masquerades as the new boy at Highcliffe. But no mention is made of the fact that Clare is a scholarship boy, and no antagonism is displayed toward him when he finally does turn up.

Then we turn forward the pages of the Magnet to Magnet No. 374 "The Fall of the Fifth", however, we come to quite another story. Here there is mention of Clare's - or Countenay's - early difficulties at Highcliffe, and it undoubtedly confirms the Boys' Friend version. As all three stories are the work of Charles Hamilton, one can only assume either that he had forgotten all about Clare's early arrival in Magnet No. 344, or that he had forgotten that he had used the name at all, in which case we assume that the two Clare's were meant to

be quite separate individuals. Queer little anomalies like this are sometimes apparent in a few works of fiction by Charles Hamilton, although it would be difficult to find another pair so close together as these. (Perhaps the only other discrepancy of interest is the fact that Mr. Quelch was named as Tom Merry's form-master in the 1<sup>st</sup> Gems, when he was at Clavering College). But so far as the Boys' Friend 3d library is concerned, the tracking down of such things is made more difficult by the fact that no dates were ever put on this series, and the only reliable method of ascertaining their chronology is to scan their contemporary publications for advertisements of them.

To give it its full title, the Boys' Friend 3d Monthly Library was, it may be seen, like the Holiday Annual in that it contained very few stories by Charles Hamilton that were making their initial appearance. Thus it seems strange that his favourite story should be one of them. Yet it was and by the same curious twist of circumstances, it was never re-printed. This was indeed unfortunate as copies of these are, as it has already been asserted as scarce as gold dust. On the few occasions when any do change hands they command prices as high, if not higher, than 1<sup>st</sup> Magnets. For this reason it is unlikely that many collectors, however far they wander off the beaten track of collecting, will ever reach the secluded spot among the works of Mr. Hamilton in which they may read the only true story of how Courtenay came to Highcliffe.

The author wishes gratefully to acknowledge the invaluable assistance rendered by Mr. J.R. Shaw.

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.



# Letter Box

The Bunter Book won't be long now

Amazing facts about the demand

You may see it as a Film!

: : :

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

1st July, 1947.

Thank you for your letter, and many thanks for sending along the "Pluck" reproductions, which interested me very much, I return them herewith. I never thought that I should ever see the first number of St. Jim's again. It awakens a lot of old memories. Tom Merry had not been thought of when it was written, neither had Arthur Augustus D'Arcy - though the latter appeared a few numbers later in a subsequent "Pluck" story.

Your story of the lady of Cardiff interests me very much. It is very pleasant to be remembered like that.

Now I have a spot of news that may perhaps interest you. Probably I have mentioned at one time or another that I used to write songs in the "dear dead days beyond recall". One of these was a duet called "Tell me what is love", for which my youngest sister wrote the music. This was published in 1908 by Ascherberg Hopwood and Crew. At that time I had only lately become "Frank Richards" and my own name of "Charles Hamilton" was on the song. A new edition is now to be issued and this will bear the name of Frank Richards. Everything takes time in these leisurely days: but I expect that it will be on the market in a couple of months from now. It will be issued by the same publishers, at 16, Mortimer St., W.I. Now, as you are an expert and an authority on this subject, very much more than I am myself, I should like you to tell me whether you think anybody will be interested in a song by Frank Richards. It

has very happy old associations for me, and I shall be glad to see it in a new edition: but whether anybody else will be, I just haven't the faintest idea.

By the way, I have lately been figuring in another film, taken this time by Moore-British Film Productions, Ltd. The Bunter Book has a show, and Macdonald appears along with me as the artist. "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School" will positively appear in August. What the publishers tell me about the demand for it in the "Trade", bless their hearts, makes me wonder a little whether I shall wake up presently! Could you have guessed that it would prove a "best-seller" two months in advance of actual publication? I couldn't.

With kind regards,  
Yours sincerely,

Frank Richards.

: : :

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

5th July, 1947.

I had not seen the article you mention in the Manchester Guardian, and it is very kind of you to tell me about it, I think I can get a copy; but if it turns out otherwise, I should very much like to see yours. It is, as you say, rather a tribute - the Guardian is a paper of very high standing, and of very great influence in the South as well as in the North. As you describe it as a "pleasing" article, I must feel flattered. I am very curious to see it.

I like the Digest immensely, and wouldn't miss it for anything, and I hope that it may long flourish.

Did I tell you that a film producer called on me with a proposition to film the Bunter Book? Isn't that curious, when it is not yet even published.

With kind regards,  
Yours sincerely,  
Frank Richards.

9th July, 1947.

Dear Herbert Leckenby.

Just a line to tell you that I have received a copy of the Guardian of 27th May from Manchester.

Many thanks for telling me about it. The article by Jessel is really very pleasant reading, and I was extremely pleased with it. Luckily they had a back number to spare, but I should never have heard of it but for your kind note, and I should be very sorry indeed to have missed it. Again many thanks, my dear boy.

With kind regards,

Frank Richards.

: : :

11th July, 1947.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

You are very welcome to publish the figures I mentioned to John Shae, but get them quite right. The exact figures are - 10,000 taken up by the Trade three months ahead of publication; second 10,000 now printing - expected total, 50,000.

You will have received my letter by this time about the Guardian article. They very kindly sent me a copy of the issue and you can guess that I found it very pleasant reading. Once more thanks for having put me wise to it.

With kind regards,  
Yours sincerely,

Frank Richards.

: : :

NOTES:

I am sure all will agree that the revelations regarding the Bunter Book are truly amazing. A best seller indeed. As for a producer wanting to film a book before he has seen a line of it, well, what better compliment can we have than that.

Regarding Mr. Hamilton's reference to a newspaper

article this appeared in the Manchester Guardian 27th May. It occupied more than two half-columns of that paper and was written by R.G.Jessel. When a paper universally admitted to represent all that is best in English journalism allows that space in these days of newspaper austerity with inches almost priceless, well, again its something to be proud of. We hope to be able to publish the article in full, meanwhile here is an extract just to whet your appetite:

To-day I have forgotten every word of Henty and Walter Scott, but the characters and traditions of Greyfriars School are fresh in my memory, and I believe that in most male gatherings of 55 and 20 you will find a greater familiarity with Ooker of the Fifth and Mr. Quelch, than with Mr. Pickwick or Henry Esmond.

Well, look out for the whole article in No.9.

Now, just a word about Mr. Hamilton's reference to the lady of Cardiff. On my recent holiday my co-editor took me along to see one of his business friends who is an ardent Gem collector. For over an hour she spoke of the pleasure she had derived from that paper and paid tribute to the author with as much enthusiasm as the youngest male collector. It was another striking example of the affection the Hamilton Papers holds, and my chat with her was one of the pleasantest memories of my Cardiff holiday.

(H.L.)

MAGNETS WANTED: 1 - 850 and various numbers till 1683. Lists gladly sent. Any condition as long as readable. J.W.Geal, 60, Fleetwood Road, Kingston, Surrey.

WANTED: Gem No.1663 "Silverson on the Spot" date 30th Dec.1939. A.K.Harris 20, Battenhall Road, Worcester.

WANTED: Odd numbers complete. Old Boys Books - any condition. Some for sale and exchange. Henry J.H.Bartlett, Peashill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

STALWARTS OF THE PAST

No, not another article lauding the periodicals that are gone, but a glimpse at some of the enthusiasts who once supported the Nelson Lee.

First, let us look at No.59 of the 1st New Series. Under the heading "Correspondents Wanted" we find one, Harry McMahon, asking for pen friends. His address? 50 Long Street, West Broken Hill, N.S.W. Yes, from 'down under' we have a loyalist of the old paper who again asks for pals in 79, 80, 84 and 85, and to whom Edwy Searles Brooks replies in "Between Ourselves" in 74, 78, 86 and 90.

Australia is a long way off and a big place too, where is Harry McMahon now ?

Lionel Moxon next. A firm supporter and a keen St. Franks Leaguer, his name appears in "Between Ourselves" 46, 48, 78, 86 and 89, all 1st New Series. But stay! Lionel is no new reader. Glance back to Old Series 543 and 546, and he is writing to E.S.B. there.

In those days he lived at 59 Manor Drive, Leeds. Is he there still? Does Lionel retain happy recollections of those good old times - does he ?

Away now to Ireland. Take a look at No.139 (1st New Series) and on Edwy's page "Between Ourselves" we have a photograph of a certain Rita McEnteggart. And looking back at No.86 her name appears in print again. Address is rather vague, being given simply as Kells, Co.Meath.

Strange to reflect that the little lady smiling back at us from the top of the page is now a grown woman, married no doubt, and with a home of her own.

Does Rita McEnteggart cherish some happy memories of St. Franks even to-day ?

There are hundreds more, of course, J.W. Boucher whose name is already familiar to most readers. A. Shew, 114 Milton Road, Gravesend, Kent, of whom some of us have heard through our collecting correspondence; Yes, and so I could go on.



Twenty odd years ago ! Harry McMahon, Lionel Moxon, Rita McEnteggart, names from out of the blue. One cannot help wondering whether the Editors of "C.D." would be prepared to chance three copies of their paper in the post as messengers of goodwill. Would those copies reach their targets? And if they did, what then?

Would we regain three stalwarts of the past ?  
I wonder ?

: : :

Well, here's a novel idea, and we shall be pleased to play up. Copies of No.8 will be sent off to the three old readers of the Nelson Lee Library, as soon as published.

(H.L.)

#### CAN YOU HELP US ?

We require the serial number and date of the last issue of the following papers:-

Boys Realm Football & Sports Library; Sports for Boys; Greyfriars Herald (2nd Series); Sport and Adventure; Boys Magazine (Hiltons) Jacks Paper; Pluck (started 1922); Rocket; Boys Favourite (1929); Bullseye (started 1931); Surprise (started 1932); Sports Budget; Pilot; Wild West Library (started 1938); Football Favourite; also starting date of "Startler".

Can anyone say when "Chums" finished as a weekly or monthly?

Information required urgently for the Annual.

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

**WELL SELL OR EXCHANGE** Gems Nos.487,493,515,516,553,560,561,564,579,582,638. Magnets between 1000-1200 wanted. G.Thompson, 85 Deerpark Road, Belfast.

We reproduce below from the Leicester Mercury, a Report of the Pearson Case, without further comment:-

## LEICESTER MAN GETS THREE YEARS' FOR FRAUDS

**F**OR COMMITTING what was described as a series of "systematic and deliberate frauds," Leslie Edwin Pearson (44), hairdresser, who was said to be living with his mother at Knighton Fields-road East, Leicester, was at Leicester Quarter Sessions to-day sentenced to three years' penal servitude.

Pearson, who pleaded guilty to obtaining sums varying between £5 and £25 by false pretences.

asked for 16 other offences to be taken into consideration.

The total amount involved was said to be £265.

Prosecuting, Mr. J. A. Grieves said it was the practice of Pearson to offer for sale quantities of books upon receipt of cash sums. Having received a small sum he would then say he had had a better offer, but wished to give the purchaser another chance. If his victim proceeded to send an increased amount, yet another offer would be produced.

### Six Postal Orders

In this particular case, a Mr. William Henry Neate received a letter from accused on February 2nd, supposed to have been written by a Miss L. Pearson, who was supposed to be disposing of her dead brother's property. Mr. Neate sent Pearson six £1 postal orders. On February 7th Pearson sent him another letter, saying he had 5,000 magazines for which he had received a local offer of £20.

He pointed out he would have to accept the better offer unless a further offer of £10 was forthcoming from Mr. Neate.

Mr. Neate sent a money order for £15, and received a further letter from accused asking for still more money. A telegraphic order for £3 was sent, to which Pearson replied that he had been away, and that while he had been absent he had received an offer of £40. The total amount of money received from Mr. Neate was £24.

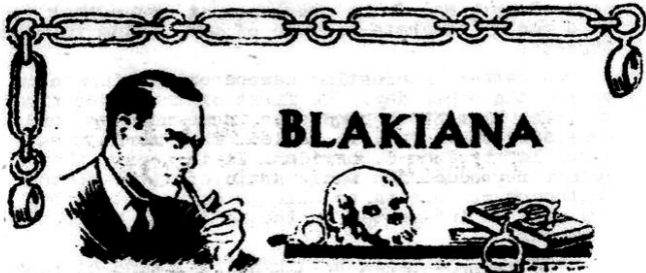
### Gambling Debts

Regarding a second victim, Pearson obtained by similar methods sums totalling £25, and from a third victim £5.

There was a second indictment against Pearson, who was accused of attempting to obtain £16 by false pretences. On this occasion he offered three typewriters for £16, which aroused the suspicions of the purchaser, who informed the police.

Mrs. Y. Fraser, who appeared for the defence, said Pearson had got into difficulties with bookmakers, and most of the money he obtained had gone to settle gambling debts.

Pearson, who was said to have had 12 previous convictions, told the Recorder (Mr. G. J. Paull): "Whatever sentence you give me, sir, I know will be well deserved."



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

### THE ROUND TABLE

As I thought, the illustrated heading by Wilfred Darwin which we introduced for the first time last month, has proved immensely popular with the majority of our readers. The bouquets are all yours, Wilf, and you deserve 'em, for you did a fine piece of work. This heading is now to be the "trade mark" of Blakiana.

The third Blake Crossword Puzzle and the second one contributed by Rex Dolphin was also a success. We hope to include more puzzles of this nature ere long. Rex has become a regular contributor to "Blakiana" and I hope you will agree with me that his latest effort "Blake on Stage, Screen and Radio" is well up to standard. He will appear again next month with a really interesting contribution entitled "Portraits of Blake".

Thanks for all the nice remarks about my own humble effort "Laughing with Mrs. Bardell". I am working on the second in this series and hope to include it in No. 10. The forthcoming attraction announced last month, namely, "The House" will unfortunately be delayed for some weeks owing to the fact that a great

deal of work has to be over-come in order that it be a really adequate picture of the "house in Baker Street".

Two rather interesting newspaper cuttings came my way the other day. The first of these was from an Irish Free State newspaper (name unknown) and consisted of an article called "They weren't so Horrible" by John D. Sheridan. It is a pity that we cannot reproduce the whole article at the moment (although we hope to be able to do so later) but you will be interested in the following extracts, I am sure:-

"Unless you begin by liking some kind of reading you will never end up by liking the best, and a taste cannot be directed until it exists. Hence the need for school stories and for blood and murder in old dis-used warehouses by the docks. Nelson Blake and Sexton Blake may be dead, but they will have their supporters so long as boys remain boys, and their epitaph is still being written".

Now I echo Mr. Sheridan's sentiments re the need for stories that will really interest boys, in fact I have no patience with those who sneer at the mere mention of such as Sexton Blake, but I do wonder where he got the idea that Blake was as good as "under the sod". Doesn't he know that not only is Blake still very much alive but that only recently he has been portrayed on the screen by one of our leading actors? And it seems that he is quite ignorant of the fact that even Tinker now sups his pint of old and mild in the company of his famous master. The error in names (i.e. Nelson Blake) is possibly a misprint, but I guess that the Lee fans would be rather disgusted at the association with Blake!

The second cutting comes from "The Bristol Evening Post" of 28th June, 1947, and is taken from the film review by Harris Deans. I salute this gentleman for HIS sentiments. Reviewing the film "Hue and Cry" he compares it with some of the old "bloods" and says:-

"From Tom Sawyer" to "Just William" the human boy is the same all over the civilised world. "Sexton Blake" and other CLASSICS have done more to foster a taste for literature than their authors will ever be credited with".

As you all probably recall, Miss Dorothy L. Sayers once alluded to Blake as part of our National Folk Lore, but it is gratifying to know that someone else thinks of him as a classical character. We Blake lovers know this to be very true, for have we not spent endless hours in his company? And haven't we often turned from some massive tome (reputed to be "very well written") and found that an old S.B.L. gave us more enjoyment, yea and even more inspiration. Hats off then to a newspaper film critic who "knows his onions".

Gee! I must stop now, or this whole issue of "Blakiana" will be taken up by my chat. I hope I have interested you all anyhow.

Cheerio for now,

*A.M. Bond*

FOR SALE: Holiday Annuals 1923 and 1947; Chums 1936-7; 2d Pluck, 1-26 (1922) Bound; Thriller, Bound Vol.37 Nos. (1933); 21 Schoolboys' Own Library as new; 24 Boys' Friend 4d Library (1932-36); and several others. H.Dowler, 86 Hamilton Road, Manchester 13.

WANTED URGENTLY: Nelson Lee Librarys. 1st New Series Nos.20,21,22,24,25,27,28,29,31,34,35,37,38,43,172. 2nd Series (New) 25. Also Schoolboys' Owns, Nos.4,27,54,56,120,212. And most old series Nelson Lee 112 - 568. E.McPherson, 80 Benedict Street, Glastonbury, Som.

FOR SALE: 51 Chums 1913-14. Vols.Captain 1908,1911. Nelson Lee Nos.1-50, 1926-27. 19 N.L. 1918-26 between Nos.160-555. WANTED: Complete with covers Magnets Nos.100-374 and 800-999. W.H.Neate, "Wenlock" Burnham, Bucks.

"Blakianas" regular star contributor REX DOLPHIN now traces the history of Sexton Blake in the entertainment world. This is not intended to be an accurate record of the films and plays in which our favourite detective has appeared but merely the author's own memories and discoveries from old numbers of Blake papers.

BLAKE ON STAGE, SCREEN, AND RADIO  
by Rex Dolphin

Sexton Blake has always been essentially a reader's hero, and attempts to put him into other mediums (illustrations and E.R.P.'s bust excepted) have never been noteworthy for their startling success. However, the Blake records would not be complete without mention of these attempts.

I cannot claim that this is a complete record, and shall be grateful to any reader who can add to or amend it.

Stage:

The earliest announcement of a Blake Play in my files appears in issues of the U.J. dated mid-1911. There are two plays advertised:-

HUSH-MONEY, or The Disappearance of Sexton Blake.

And the Magnificent Melodrame - SEXTON BLAKE, DETECTIVE.

Unfortunately no details are available about authors' or players' names. Probably other such plays were produced in the pre-1920 period, but my collection of U.J.'s before 1920 is not complete.

Then, in 1930, came an event for Blake lovers. Let the U.J. speak:-

SEXTON BLAKE PLAY!

at the

PRINCE EDWARD THEATRE

(Old Compton Street, London, W.)

The event all keen followers of the world's most popular detective have been waiting for - a first

class stage play by first class artists in a first class theatre. Look out for -

ARTHUR WONTNER

in

"SEXTON BLAKE"

A brilliant detective drama in four Acts

by

DONALD STEWART

I remember reading some good criticisms of this play, especially one in the News of the World.

The story of this play was published in U.J. No. 1422 dated 17th Jan. 1931, under the title "Mr. Midnight" and a full-page portrait of Arthur Wontner as S.B. appeared on the cover. It was a yarn of the Edgar Wallace mystery-man whodunit type, so typical of Donald Stuart's (Gerald Verner's) work.

Screen:

The first reference I can find to a Sexton Blake film is in the U.J. in early 1920. The film was entitled "The Mystery of the S.S. Olympic", was produced by Gaumont, and the story was published in U.J. No. 857 dated 13th March, 1920. According to the editor's announcement it was written by Robert Murray. Once again there are no particulars about the actors.

In late 1928 a series of S.B. films was produced by British Filmcraft Productions Ltd, the first of which was entitled "The Mystery of the Silent Death". This had its premiere at the Capitol, Cardiff, on 24th December, 1928. It was a two-reeler, and further titles followed, namely: "Silken Threads", "The Great Office Mystery", "Sexton Blake, Gambler", "The Clue of the Second Goblet", and "Blake the Law Breaker".

Sexton Blake was played by Langhorne Burton and Tinker by Mickey Brantford, and during 1928 and 1929 portraits of these two as Blake and Tinker were printed in the S.B.L. and U.J., with real photos obtainable at a small charge.

Announcements appeared weekly in the U.J. stating where the films were appearing. And these announcements were accompanied by a note that makes the true Blake fan's mouth water. "Copies of the famous Sexton Blake bust may be obtained at most of the cinemas showing the films.

In 1938 a series of full-length films appeared, curiously unheralded by the S.B. publications. The first was "Sexton Blake and The Bearded Doctor" - based, I believe, on a Rex Handinge yard "The Blazing Launch Mystery". Then came "Sexton Blake and The Mademoiselle" based on "They Shall Re-pay", the first of the Roxane stories. The only information I have regarding players is that George Curzon played Blake. I'd like to know who played the beautiful Roxane!

In the same series came the only one that was much publicised - "Sexton Blake and The Hooded Terror" based on "The Mystery of No.13 Caversham Square", by Pierre Quiroule. The original story was published in S.B.L. No.569.

This film attracted quite a lot of attention from the national critics. George Curzon again played Blake, Greta Gynt, Mdlle.Julie, and David Farrar, Granite Grant.

On to 1945. On 27th January of that year the national periodical ILLUSTRATED ran a two-page spread of the new Anglo-American production "Meet Sexton Blake". David Farrar played Blake - probably the most natural Blake we've ever had. John Varley was Tinker.

I would very much have liked to see this film but was abroad at the time. From the review in ILLUSTRATED it looked the best film made to date. Perhaps some reader will tell me what story it was based on or whether it was an original story. It looked to me like the work of Anthony Parsons.

#### Radio:

Sexton Blake appeared on the Radio in 1939, in a short serial called "Enter Sexton Blake", featured



as part of "Monday Night at Eight". This was based on an Edwy Searles Brooks (Berkeley Grey) story which appeared previously in the S.B.L. and was later serialised in D.W. Once again I have no details of players' names.

Tail-Piece:

Blake has also been recorded for the gramophone. H.M.V. No.C.2044 - "Murder on the Portsmouth Road", a one-act play with Arthur Wontner in the lead.

CORRECTION:

In the Rex Dolphin Crossword in No.7, an error crept in owing to the omission of a clue. It should have read:-

- 28 Across: Familiar way to address Stuart.  
29 Across: Initials of 26 across.

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD No.3:

A	S	H	-	-	B	A	T	-	S	B	-
-	P	A	-	H	A	M	I	L	T	O	N
H	Y	L	T	O	N	-	N	-	O	W	L
O	-	-	-	P	A	R	K	E	R	-	-
M	A	R	V	E	L	-	E	-	Y	O	U
E	-	-	A	-	-	P	R	-	-	-	N
-	S	B	L	-	L	I	-	V	A	L	I
T	-	U	-	T	E	E	D	-	N	-	O
I	-	S	A	Y	E	R	-	-	D	O	N
G	H	T	-	R	-	R	-	D	R	-	-
E	-	-	D	E	R	E	K	-	E	S	B
R	Y	M	E	R	-	-	K	E	W	-	-

SEXTON BLAKE "QUIZ" No.3:

QUESTIONS

1. Who was the author of the S.B. stories featuring the character "Sixpence" ?
2. What was "The Red Peril"?
3. What was the nickname of Janssen ?
4. Who were Harmon & O'Flynn. Give their Christian

- names & name the originator of the characters.
- Name the last story in the S.B.L. second series, and the first story in the third series. Name also the character featured in each story.
  - Which three Blake authors have written about the same foreign character? Name the character and it's originator.

CASH OR EXCHANGE OFFERS REQUIRED: For following Parcels - Fifty Boys' Friends, 1930-1936; Dozen ditto. (each Mint condition); 50 Modern Boys, average state; 15 S.O.L.; several bound volumes; The Captain; various boys and childrens Annuals and bound books (full list 3d). WANTED: Monsters, Nuggets, Populars, Magnets, S.O.L., Gems, Lees, and Stamp Collections. Everything considered. Joseph Baguley, "Moorings", Pensilva, S.E.Cornwall.

THE STORY OF DOCTOR SATIRA

by H.M.Bond.

Part 1

On 27th Nov.1926, four months after Sexton Blake has finally smashed the infamous Criminals Confederation, and whilst he was still at grips with some of the most dangerous of his arch enemies, the detective was faced with a new menace, probably the greatest of all. When the story "Lord of the Ape Men" featuring Dr.Satira was published in "Union Jack" No.1206, we little thought that this new character was to prove a most potent and devilish force and that our detective was to be faced with even greater hazards than he had experienced in his recent struggles against the Confederation. Although the authors names were not being given at that time, we knew that the same hand was responsible for the creation of Satira as for the Confederation, for, in the first story, the fiendish doctor was first introduced to Sexton Blake by Dirk Dolland who was a most important character in the latter series. Now that the curtain has been raised and the mystery of the men responsible for the Blake stories we know that it was Robert Murray. Great credit is due to this

fine author, who, although now deceased, still is one of the favourites of those who were familiar with Blake in the 1920's. In Satira he created a man who was utterly ruthless and quite immune to any feeling of pity for his fellow men. Even his accomplices were callously done to death when their purpose had been served and it is doubtful whether there were any more horrific situations in the whole history of Blake stories than we were faced with in the stories of this character. To properly introduce Dr. Satira I must first of all relate that Dirk Dolland and John Fade, who had become favourites amongst Confederation characters, soon became bored when that organisation was finally smashed and decided to visit the secret city of Llasha in Tibet. While journeying through the Himalayas they heard strange stories of a race of ape men who were said to be almost human. Obviously Dolland and Fade could not resist the temptation to "look in" on the secret dwelling place of this strange race and although they were faced with much opposition from their native guides and bearers they eventually located the spot known as Khurdan where the ape men lived in caves. The stories about these creatures were found to be only too true and the ape-men even had a language of their own and a religion which conformed to that of some of the ancient civilisations. There "god" was known as Darsha and was represented by a huge and hideous carved idol which bore distinct resemblance to an ape. The explorers curiosity was great and they ventured rather too far resulting in Dolland having to shoot one of the ape men in self defence. This enraged this strange community and they soon attacked and overcame both men finally escorting them to their ruler. This individual proved to be a most cultured and educated and not the "super ape man" that one would have expected. In the words of John Fade he was one of the most amazing men that he had ever met, "a brilliant scholar and sayant, and yet one of the vilest, most cold blooded scoundrels unhung". Yes, it was Dr. Satira! Here in the mountains of the North West of India existed the man who was to become the arch

enemy of Sexton Blake and the most dangerous criminal ever known. Without disclosing his precise nationality Satira claimed to have been educated in Europe and to possess degrees in practically every branch of science. His knowledge of medicine was undoubtedly great. It was impossible to adequately describe the man, for his appearance was most hideous. Quoting John Fade again, he had "the eyes of a snake, the head of a vulture, the face of a fiend, and the voice of a cooing dove". He was addicted to snuff taking and this habit was very much pronounced all through the series of stories about this most amazing criminal.

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Part 2 will tell how Dr. Satira had become the leader of the ape men, his ultimate arrival in London, and his first conflict with Sexton Blake. Make sure that YOU obtain YOUR COPY of C.D. next month.

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