

The

Collectors'

Digest

(Vol.No.2)

No.15.

MARCH 1894

No.1 of the  
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(27th Nov, 1866)  
which ran to  
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Exchanges welcomed. H.A. Smith, 13, New Rd.,  
Scole, Diss, Norfolk - - -



(Vol.2) No.15

Price 1s.1d

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MARCH 1948

Next Issue : April 1948

Editor, Miscellaneous Section:

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

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR:

The Circulation of the C.D.

I have just been running through my mailing list and I find our little Mag. penetrates into almost every English county. In addition, it travels to Scotland, North and Soyth Wales, Northern Ireland, Eire, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and U.S.A. Not bad for a youngster of just over a year!

The counties in which we have at present no subscribers are: Cumberland, Westmorland, Wilts., Hunts., and those seats of learning, Oxford and

Cambridge, and little Rutland. Does anyone know of any likely "new chums" in these "backward areas"?

### An Interesting Find

A member of the clan, browsing in a booksellers in a Northern bye-way not long ago made a real find. 28 numbers of the Aldine Invention Library in splendid condition, and handsomely bound. He paid a good price for them, but not unreasonable. As old timers know well, these famous Frank Reade stories are as rare as a Crippsian smile.

Now it occurs to me that quite a number of collectors would tell an interesting story of some stroke of luck like this or maybe of a less fortunate incident where some treasure just slipped through their fingers. If so, please send them along. In the next Annual I propose describing some of my own experiences under the title "The Joys and Sorrows of a Collector". I've had quite a few of both. With experiences of others added I am sure it will make an interesting feature.

### For the attention of Northern Readers

Following the example of our London friends we are hoping to arrange in the near future a meeting of Northern Collectors. For originating the idea we have to thank Mr. Reg. A. Hudson, 5 Throstle Row, Middleton, Leeds, 10, and he has very kindly offered to play host to any who could attend. It would have to be a Saturday, possibly in April or May. There are sufficient members in easy distance of his home to make a successful little gathering. Would those who think they could manage it please get in touch with either Mr. Hudson or myself? There's nothing like getting together.

### Display Adverts

Readers will have noticed that we have recently introduced a new idea - display adverts. We are

confident all will agree our enterprising duplicating agency has made a really effective job of these. Why not try one. Terms are on another page.

We are continuously receiving evidence that adverts. in the G.D. have real pulling power, especially those offering papers for sale. Only the other day one advertiser told me that just five minutes after he had received his copy he had an enquiry on the 'phone for some Magnets he had advertised therein from a collector who had also just got his copy and meant to be in first.

Oh, those Magnets! How they still attract! The demand for them is amazing. Would that a hidden hoard could be unearthed somewhere.

Yours sincerely,

*Herbert Leckenby*

"The Collectors' Digest" Subscription Rates:

Single copies 1s.1d post free. Three copies (on publication) 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).

Advert: 1s.6d each for Magnets 1000-1100; 1s.3d for 1100-1200; 36 Magnets 1100-1200 for Exchange. G. Thompson, 85 Deerpark Road, Belfast.

Advert: Do you collect Stamps as well as Books? If so, send for my Repeat Approvals. Free Gift for all those who want one. Postage, please. H.A. Smith, 13, New Road, Scole, Diss, Norfolk.

WANTED: Schoolboys Own Libraries Nos. 1, 3, 13, 23, 47, 61, 77, 83, 87, 89, 93, 107, 113, 123, 129, 131, 133, 140. Will pay 1/6 each. J. Shepherd, 3 Priory Place, Nether Edge, Sheffield, 7.

The Pulsing Life of Maxwell Scott

by R. A. H. Goodyear

Last year the author of a semi-biographical article in this magazine wrote with enthusiasm about Maxwell Scott's amazing output and left us wondering how a novelist who was also a busy doctor could have found time for all the stories he originated.

Doctors are trained to endure a hard and exacting life on a minimum of sleep. They must be ready to tumble out of bed at any hour of the night and hurry off to an urgent case. Dr. Staniforth had the average number of telephone calls to answer in the small hours and seldom enjoyed a night's uninterrupted slumber. How then did he find the leisure for the many yarns which his ever-active brain conceived?

I have recently made inquiries about him from people who knew him and none can say that he ever used a dictaphone or had a secretary to help him. Edgar Wallace employed both to aid him in his voluminous production; apparently Maxwell Scott did not. Did he strike off his stories straight away on a typewriter or did he follow the method I have always used myself - that of writing the first drafts of my tales in shorthand notebooks, usually in the open air and invariably in pencil?

When I had filled four such notebooks I knew I was nearing the end of my 80,000 word narrative and that another half-filled notebook would suffice, allowing 5 000 extra words for curtailment when I went through the pencilled manuscript to cut out every line that didn't seem good to me on second thoughts. Such stern condensation is always good for a tale, but it is very doubtful if Maxwell Scott ever adopted that painstaking and laborious method; he had far too many printing-presses to feed.

One informant tells me that he kept two typists

going on the constant job of copying his MSS. and I think that most likely. Yet another informant says, "Oh, no, he did his own typing - you could see him hard at it as you passed his window." He probably did a lot of typing himself, besides employing professional copyists for his finished MSS. I cannot find that he at any time was compelled to neglect any of his patients. He was as cheerfully ready as any other doctor would be to attend to the sick or to go to accident cases in the wide area he covered.

Stanley Maidment, the contributor of the Maxwell Scott article, spoke of the doctor's dynamic energy as being only equalled by the vitality of his prolific brain. In that district, with so many ironstone workers as his patients, he would certainly need to be a physically fit man. In later life, however, he must have slowed down considerably if what another informant tells me is correct. This was that he contracted a complaint which at times brought him to a dead stop in the street - perhaps a form of arthritis. He would then smilingly appeal to a passer-by for help. "Here, I say, give me a push, please" he would implore.

The casual helper would go behind him and give him the necessary push, starting him off again on his walk. If arthritis were really the doctor's malady, I know from experience that it will bring you sensationally to a standstill at any moment, almost as though your lower limbs had been struck by lightning.

Until I have had the opportunity of interviewing some of his old patients on the subject of their beloved doctor, I shall still be much in the dark about Maxwell Scott's methods of literary work. I am convinced that they were swift ones. Possible in the first place he wrote his yarns in shorthand - that would enable him to keep pace with his galloping thoughts, though even then there would be the

troublesome necessity of transcribing the short-hand hieroglyphics into longhand before they could be typed.

Were I ten years younger I should enjoy trying to write the biography of such an energetic and popular author-doctor and I am confident that intimate details of his animated career would be welcome to thousands of his countless admirers in all parts of the globe. I suggest that some Maxwell Scott devotee, who has the essential experience in book-writing, should approach a publisher and procure a promise of publication - then go cheerfully ahead with "The Life of Maxwell Scott, Boys' Author" and make a really human and lovable thing of it.

#### Display Advertisements:

Half page - one insertion 8s.0d. Three insertions 23s.0d. Quarter Page - one insertion - 4s.6d. Three insertions - 12s.6d.

Here's an interesting little contribution from Ben, brother of Bob, our clever artist. It made your editor a little wistful for when he was young he had to hide his favourites under the counter so to speak, and read them protected by the covers of "Pilgrim's Progress" or "Christy's Old Organ". Any more happy families?

#### A Family of Collectors by Benjamin George Whiter

Strictly speaking the above title is rather a misleading one, as the family this article describes the youngest member of the family, Robert. This he has done admirably as I shall write about later. Readers of Henderson's Young Folk's Fairy Tales of yesteryear will, no doubt, recall the fact that the youngest prince was always the most successful. This appertains to the Whiter family as regards the collecting of old boys papers and we elder members

are content to have it that way. Robert has done a remarkably fine job of this and a well stocked bookshelf of Boys Own Papers, Captains, and Greyfriars Holiday Annuals, all bound, and a good collection of Magnets and Gems convenient in a large box testify to this fact. A bound edition of the first volume of Story Paper Collector, all the issued numbers of Collectors' Digest, and several numbers of Collectors' Miscellany complete the picture. And so we other members of the family can browse through the papers we loved at our leisure.

William Henry, father of us three boys, commenced the good work in his youth by buying the first numbers of the Marvel, Pluck, Boys' Friend, Boys' Realm, Big Budget, Union Jack, Chips, Comic Cuts and the Captain. Thus, when I, Benjamin George, was old enough to read some of the above I was not debarred. But by this time the only paper regularly taken in was the Union Jack and naturally I read these in my turn. The first Magnet I bought was the one entitled "The Schoolboy Speculator" featuring Fisher T. Fish. Thence came my introduction to the Gem, Penny Popular and the Boys' Friend, not forgetting the first run of the Greyfriars Herald. My first Boys Friend Library was the one containing the Frank Richards story of Greyfriars - "After Lights Out". Another weekly old boys paper that I used to enjoy was the Nelson Lee Library with the talks of Cyrus Tingrave of the Green Triangle and the Circle of Terror.

Came the first world war and I was evacuated away to school where the three most circulated papers were the Boys' Own Paper, the Captain, and the Nelson Lee Library. The latter by now, contained the enjoyable school stories of St. Franks. Well, time marched on, and I had two brothers arrive. Douglas and Robert, who continued the good work of reading and by now collecting some of our favourite old boys papers. I was residing in Margate at this time and during my eleven years there I was unaware

of the close proximity of the immortal Frank Richards. My occasional visits home were gladdened by the fact that I was able to re-new acquaintances with the well loved characters of old.

At the present moment, including father and mother, there are six of us all interested in the collecting and reading of some of the boys papers of yesteryear. Does this constitute a record? Perhaps we shall be hearing in the near future of other family collectors.

In conclusion, I should like to state the fact that my own collection consists only of all the issues of Story Paper Collector and the Gem 1619, entitled "Rhet called him a Duffer". In this number on the editor's page will be seen a photograph of Robert some years ago reading the Gem and I am very pleased to be able to state that I was the photographer.

WANTED to complete Vol.1 of Story Paper Collector prior to binding, No.9. Benjamin G. Whiter, 706, Lordship Lane, London N.22.

MAGNETS WANTED: Urgently, between 1922 and 1930. Good prices paid. Have Magnets 1936 to 1940 for exchange. J. Corbett, 49 Glyn Farm Road, Quinton, Birmingham.

WANTED: Aldine Publications, Dick Turpins, Claude Davals, etc. E.R. Landy, 4 Nuneston Road, Dagenham, Essex.

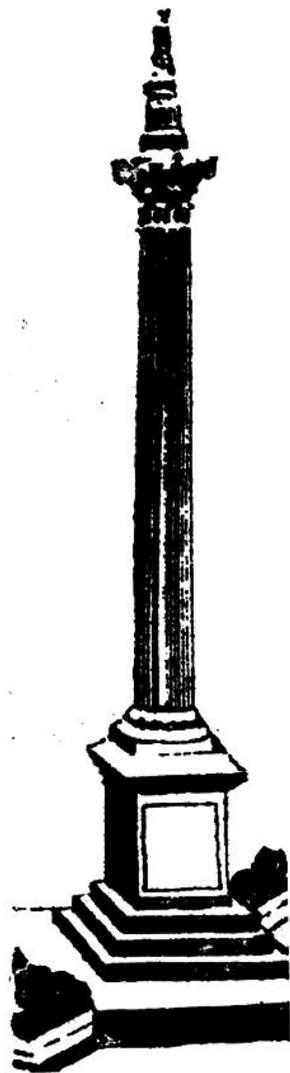
WANTED! WANTED! WANTED! Nelson Lee! Gem Series of Arthur - Alan Castleton twins. Good prices given. L. Vosper, 13 Kinlet Road, London, S.E.18.

PRIVATE COLLECTOR: Exchanges parcels (Lee, Magnets, Gem, S.O.L. etc.) Level Terms. Clean copies only, 12 to 50. Joseph Baguley, Moorings, Pensilva, S.E. Cornwall.

Advertise in the "Collectors' Digest"

# The Nelson Lee Column

Conducted by Robert Blythe  
Alsen Road, Holloway, London N.7.



I think we all agree that our respected editors made a very fine job of the Annual and it may seem rather captious to point out one or two errors. As far as we Nelson Lee supporters are concerned the "Milestones" article on page 66 is all that need be mentioned. In the section dealing with the N.L. the first line should read: "No.1 published Wednesday, 9th June, 1915, price 1d. 52 pages". No.16 should be entitled "Twenty Fathoms Deep" and not "The Crystal Urn" and No.96 had 36 pages and not 32. In all cases where the number of pages are given it is inclusive of cover. Whilst we are still on this subject, here are a few other facts and figures to make this short history more complete. No.96 is also the first of the stories "written by Nipper". No.75, 1st New Series saw the last of the drawing of Arthur Jones after 12 years. The first 14 numbers of the 2nd New Series contained detective stories but commencing with No.15, St. Franks was re-introduced

as short stories 7 pages in length. Artist was Kenneth Brookes. In Nos.29-111 the school stories were nearly as long as before, (30 pages out of the 44). Then with Nos.112 to the end of the series we find the St.Franks stories occupying only 5 pages.

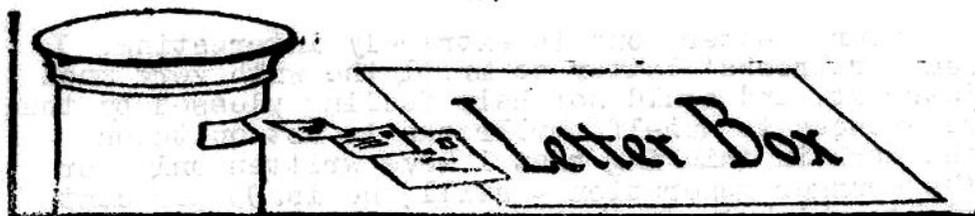
A couple of queries this month come from Mr. Smith of Norfolk. First he wants to know how many St.Franks stories appeared in the Holiday Annual. Well, I only know of two. One in 1932 entitled "Rivals of St.Franks" and in 1936 "Handforth's Windfall". Both are original. In all probability a St. Franks story appeared in Holiday Annuals between these dates, but as I have no copies for those years I cannot tell. Perhaps if one of you who have them would care to pass on the information I could then answer the question more fully. What were the names of the artists whose work appeared in the N.I.? All the Old Series and about half the 1st New Series (see above) were by Arthur Jones. In the 2nd New Series there were Saville Lumley, Ernest Ibbetson, and Kenneth Brookes. There were one or two others, one illustrating the latter half of the 1st New Series in particular, but their work was never signed, and are consequently unknown, at least to me. There's just space, I think, for one more query. This comes from Mr.Young of London who asks when did Archie Glenthorne, Willy Handforth and William Napoleon Brown arrive at the School? Well, Archie appeared in No.352 O.S. "The Coming of Archie Glenthorne". Willy in No.386 O.S. "Handforth's Minor", and W.N.Brown in No.513 O.S. "Fooling the School".

More facts next month.

P.S:

Are there no more copies of No.1?

EXCHANGES: 10 Volumes (unbound) Mystery and Adventure Story Magazine, 60 copies, also hundreds bound books, Mystery, etc. State wants, for Magnets Dreadnoughts, Holiday Annuals, etc. Also other books. State wants. All letters answered, also any odd copies. Anything. Henry J.H.Bartlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.



Frank Richards the Indefatigable  
He's finished the THIRD Bunter Book!!

17th Feb. 1948.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Thank you for your C.D. with letter enclosed.

No, I did not catch the Monday night at Eight quiz in which Bunter was mentioned, but have heard a good deal about it since. I was very much amused last week to hear Tommy Handley talking about Bunter in "Itma". It was rather curious that I had listened in to Tommy almost to the finish, last Thursday, and was then called away - afterwards being told that he had got on to Bunter in the last few minutes. So I turned on the "repeat" on Saturday and was duly rewarded.

We hope to see "Billy Bunter's Banknote" in the book-shops early this year. But everything, as usual, turns on paper, so you never can tell. However, I have just finished the third volume, which is called "Billy Bunter's Barring Out". Billy, as usual, butts into the title; but it is a "Bob Cherry" story. I have a sort of hunch that the paper position is going to get easier later in the year, and hope, at least, that the third book may follow the second without too long an interval.

I like Eric Payne's article in the C.D. He is a little tough on Trimble, but not tougher than Baggy deserves.

Your "Letter Box" is extremely interesting, I read Mr. Brooks' letter to Mr. Blythe with very much interest, and could not help feeling pleased by the references to myself. Mr. Brooks is not quite on the mark in thinking that I have written only for the younger generation - still, he is 99 per cent right, which is near enough. I gather from the letter that Mr Brooks is now writing thriller novels. I have never come across these, but should certainly like to do so. Might it not be a good idea to give some particulars in the C.D. so that the admirers of Mr. Brooks may get into touch with his later writings?

With kind regards,  
Yours sincerely,

Frank Richards.

:: :: ::

Brickbats from Cornwall !

16th Jan. 1948.

Sir,

Mr. Eric Fayne's amusing letter will not be accepted at face-value by readers of the "Lee" - they have heard Eric before, on the same topic.

No tears will be shed at the news that the "Lee" leaves him cold. Mr. Fayne prefers good solid fish-paste sandwiches to sticky jam rolls, and who shall blame him? At this stage nobody needs telling that a rabid enthusiast such as E.F. will be prepared at a moment's notice to decry anything and everything except the work of the craftsmen they favour. The two writers of boys' stories concerned are both "small beer" outside their own limited fields. C.H. wrote thirty stories and has been repeating them ever since, with milk-and-water variations. E.S.B. tried for range and imagination, failing as often as not, but HIS WORK IS MORE ESSENTIALLY INTERESTING TO AN AVERAGE SMALL BOY. These stories, in each case, were written for lads be-

tween 9 and 15; they are escapist fiction with a shockingly meagre basis of realism, and though I personally read both types still, I think it a mistake to over-rate them. Mr. Brooks' lack of interest is understandable in a writer, his current work naturally absorbs his practical attention.

Yours, etc.

Joseph Baguley.

(Note: We can hear some staunch supporters exclaiming "No, no, Mr. Baguley," when they read this, but we must allow readers to say what they like so long of course, that they do not transgress the laws of libel. Ed.)

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Eric Fayne Sticks to His Guns

14th Feb. 1948.

Dear Mr. Editor,

The hypersensitive worshippers at the shrine of Nelson Lee have flown to the defensive, but against what, eludes me, at the moment.

In my original letter I commented upon the statement of Mr. E. S. Brooks that he no longer has any interest in his St. Franks work. I consider that this statement was a snub to the large number of admirers of his school stories, and I said so. I still think the same.

Mr. Allen has construed my letter into a ruthless criticism of Mr. Brooks' stories. What I said actually was that I had never had any interest in these stories, which is a fact. I cannot ever remember finishing one, though I occasionally started.

I believe that I added that they were best forgotten. Who can gainsay this, if the author himself feels that way?

Mr. Brooks' explanation on another page may sug-

arcoat the pill for Leeites. I take strong exception, however, to his remark that it is hardly fair of Eric Payne to compare him with Frank Richards! I did not mention Frank Richards in my letter, nor have I, in the G.D. ever compared that incomparable writer with Mr. Brooks.

Our old friend Leslie Vosper, really sums the matter up well, in his usual straightforward style. He says "Does it really matter"?

I think it doesn't! If the Leeites can continue to rally round St. Frank's after the principal has thrown in the sponge - all the more power to their respective elbows.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Payne.

WANTED: Magnets prior to 1370. Can offer in exchange 16 Gem volumes delightfully bound in blue cloth (Nos. 997 to 1663); Holiday Annuals 1941, 4 vols; Chums 1924, 1926 (2) 1940; Bound vol. Boys' Friend 131 to 156. School yarns in excellent condition by Michael Poole, Gunby Hadath, Hylton Cleaver, Alfred Judd, Talbot Barnes Reed, and others; Captain, vol. 1922, Apr.-Sept., 38 S.O. Libs. 19 N.L's. and 26 odd Gems. Frank Snell, Rathgar, 6 Chingswell Street, Bideford, Devon.

WANTED TO BUY; or if required will exchange for Union Jacks, Plucks, and Marvels, the following Halfpenny Union Jacks, Nos. 407 to 494; particularly the Christmas (1902) number, "The Watch of the Moor" and also No. 456 "Dermot the Outlaw" (for these two items I will pay 2s. 6d each). The Jester, 1902 to 1904. The Big Budget; Pocket Library; St. Nicholas Magazine, Part One, Vol. XXIX (will pay ten shillings) Boys' Friend halfpenny series; Graphic Christmas Numbers; Books for the Bairns; The Sketch; Ally Sloper's Half Holiday. Please Note: I have nothing for sale. Frank Pettingell, Highfield Lodge, Wise Lane, London, N.W. 7.

ADVERTISEMENT:

This is an example of the satisfied letters I receive from Collectors:-

3rd February, 1948.

Dear Mr. Martin,

I am in very grateful receipt of the seven copies of the S.O.L., and the balance of 6s.0d.

I would like to thank you for these, and for your kind attention regarding this matter. For some considerable time I have received reports from fellow collectors appertaining to your courtesy and fairness, and it was a great pleasure to discover these facts for myself. Many thanks indeed. It is a pleasure to do business with you.

Yours sincerely,

John Robyns.

Through extensive newspaper advertising including the London "Star", I am able to offer large quantities of Magnets, Gems, U.J's. etc. Send me your wants, and they shall have my prompt attention.

W. MARTIN

93, Hillside, Stonebridge Park.

London, N.W.10.

Telephone Willesden 4474

THE FOLLOWING MAGNETS WANTED URGENTLY: 1161, 1261, 1267, 1271, 1274, 1275, 1287, 1290, 1296-1364, 1366, 1369, 1370, 1371, 1373, 1374, 1375, 1377, 1378, 1379, 1381. J.W. Geal, 60 Fleetwood Road, Kingston, Surrey.

Advertise in the C.D.

MORE PRAISE FOR THE ANNUAL

I received the G.D. Annual on Christmas Eve and, as Maxwell Scott would say, when I glanced at its contents "A half-stiffler cry of rapturous amazement burst from my lips. Twenty years seemed suddenly to be taken off my age. I turned the pages over, absolutely spellbound at the glorious feast of reading and illustrations".

It is to but feebly express my admiration when I say the Annual is the greatest contribution of its kind in the whole history of amateur journalism.

Harry Dowler, Manchester, 13.

:: :: ::

I consider the G.D. Annual must have involved a tremendous amount of work and planning, and you are to be congratulated on the fine result.

W.E.Edwards, Essex.

:: :: ::

Hearty congratulations. Nice work! You have certainly put in plenty of that to make the Annual a success.

John Parks, Middlesbrough.

:: :: ::

I was very pleased indeed with the Annual. What a monumental work indeed! It must have taken you and Maurice all your spare time and probably much business time for months and months. My sincerest and heartiest congratulations to you both. You ought to be in the publishing business.

C.F.F.Rickard, Canada.

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Reproduced from Sheffield Telegraph, Saturday 22nd February, 1948. The leader writer certainly knew his Greyfriars. Copy kindly supplied by Mr. H. Hewitt, Gawber, Barnsley.

## HONOUR OF THE SCHOOL

**T**HE honour of Greyfriars School has been impugned. We have before us a report which thinks it appropriate to give the name of "Billy Bunter" to a green-grocer's errand boy who ate eight months' sweets ration in a week.

It was his job to mark the ration books of those who purchased potatoes. At the same time he snipped out the sweets coupons.

That is a thing that could never have happened in our days at Greyfriars. It would certainly not have been done by Billy Bunter. No less than Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry and (we think we remember) Hurree Ramset: Jam Singh did he adhere to a standard of conduct below which even his love of grub could not cause him to sink!

All who proudly count themselves Old Boys of Greyfriars will resent the introduction of the name of Billy Bunter into this errand boy's sordid story. In the words of Hurree Ramset: Jam Singh the un-called-for of the esteemed joke is terrific.

## REBELLION!

A description of the  
barring-out stories of  
the Nelson Lee Library

by  
Robert Blythe

Amongst the most popular series that appeared in the Nelson Lee Library were undoubtedly those concerning rebellions of the boys against the authorities, or "barring-out", as that were known.

Despite the popularity of this type of story it was used sparingly, and during the 19 years of the existence of the N.L.L. there appeared no more than 10 of such stories. Two of these were not, strictly speaking, a "barring-out" by the whole Remove, as one narrative was concerned with another school, and in the other, only a section of the boys took part. However, more of these later. To avoid confusion I can do no better than adopt the advice of the Red King (or was it the Queen?) to Alice, "begin at the beginning, go right on to the end and then stop".

Let us make a beginning with the first rebellion series (Nos. 149-157 Old Series) Mr. Kennedy Hunter M.A. has arrived at St. Frank's in place of Nelson Lee who is absent on Secret Service Work. In spite of an amiable appearance he soon shows his true colours - that of a petty dictator. Things become so hectic for the boys that they are at last driven to revolt. Nipper, (Alias Dick Bennett at this period) takes charge, and they barricade themselves in the Monastery Ruins for a time, but are compelled to abandon the position for a more secure one. Willards Island, in later stories the scene of many an exciting adventure, is chosen. Here they hold out successfully until, by a trick of Hunter's they leave voluntarily. When they discover they have been tricked, it is too late to go back, and everybody then "gets it in the neck". However, the tyranny is finally stopped by the boys forming a secret tribunal wherein they give Mr. Hunter some of his own medicine.

Meanwhile it appears that the Secret Service work upon which Nelson Lee is engaged, is connected with Hunter. After several exciting episodes the enraged Hunter is eventually captured (although he nearly succeeds in blowing up the school) by Nelson Lee who proves that Hunter is a spy for the Germans, and had been engaged in printing seditious literature.

The next "barring-out" on the list comes with the advent of Mr. Howard Martin (Nos. 229-236 O.S.) In some respects the plot is similar to the Hunter series. Martin has been appointed Headmaster in place of Dr. Stafford by the Governors.

He was a big powerful man with a face resembling a prize-fighter's, with a protruding chin and heavy eyebrows. Like Mr. Hunter he immediately proceeds to enliven the proceedings by punishing everybody for trivial offences. He sacks Nelson Lee, but Lee returns in disguise to fill the post he has just left. For Martin's benefit he adopts a bullying manner. (Continued)



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

The Round Table is omitted this Month

THE GREAT TINKER MYSTERY

by  
H. M. BOND

During the past few weeks the famous young assistant to "The Man from Baker Street" has been in the news, or at least his name seems to have come to the fore suddenly. In the first instance I was lucky enough to obtain that splendid story "Cunning Against Skill" (U.J.No.53) in which Tinker was supposed to have made his first appearance (a fact which I now very much doubt) and it struck me then that the changes that had since taken place in that character - from a cheeky bright faced lad, Tinker has grown into a sophisticated man of the world. No longer does he obey his master's orders at once, rather does he now argue with Blake as to the possible blunders that the latter may be making. Now these changes are all very well. We must expect them as time goes by, for the world is becoming a vastly different place to live in during recent

years and the average reader of to-day, even though he be under fourteen, likes to have much more advanced literature put before him. I am not suggesting that some of the changes that have taken place in respect of the Baker Street pair are welcome, but we have to allow for certain changes and must expect them. But not long after perusing U.J.No.53 I had a glance through some of the 1948 "Sexton Blake Libraries" and received quite a shock when I read the following in S.B.L. No.159 (3rd Series) - "The Case of the Doped Heavyweight" by Lewis Jackson: "And the public are indebted to you for your enterprise, Mr. Abrams," said Blake, "I'm sure that my assistant, here, feels that way at any rate. Meet Ted Carter, more generally known as Tinker. He's one of your fans!" and this in S.B.L. No.161 (3rd Series) - "The Income Tax Conspiracy" by Anthony Parsons: "This is Sir John Waters, Blake. He is head of the Inland Revenue Department. Sir John, this is Sexton Blake. And Tinker, or Mr. Carter, as he seems to prefer."

I had become used to the pseudo name "Carter" that Tinker often used in the stories written by John Hunter, but never realised that this was probably the commencement of a plan to give Blake's assistant an honest-to-goodness name. If this was not the case it is very probable that the present Editor of the S.B.L. has taken it upon himself to instruct his Blake authors that they must gradually build up a real name for Tinker, to bring the Blake stories right out of the children's literature section and bring them into line with other modern 'tec stories. And being that "Carter" has been used on so many occasions by Hunter it probably struck him that this name would be as good as any. Now it is on the cards that the lad we know as Tinker really did have a name before Blake took him under his wing, but it has taken over forty years to suggest it and I very much doubt if the present Editor can offer any solid reason for "Carter" above all other names. If, however, Tinker is to be changed to Ted Carter in due course, it is only

fair that followers of the Blake series for many years should be told the full story. How it was discovered that Tinker's name was really Carter? Why it is necessary to offer the change after so long a time? I might also point out that Lewis Jackson, author of many of the more personal stories of Sexton Blake, suggested to us that Tinker's name was really Smith, and this not so very long ago, in fact in S.B.L. No.77 (3rd Series) "The Case of the Five Fugitives". On that occasion he did not offer any explanation as to why he had called Tinker by the name of Smith, and it was taken by most readers as a sort of whim on the part of the author. But in the light of recent developments it would be interesting to know what was in Mr. Jackson's mind at the time.

We have been willing to accept many of Mr. Jackson's innovations, including Sexton Blake's brother, Nigel, and those mysterious relations of Tinker's who made an appearance in a recent story and included two youngsters who called Tinker "Uncle Tinker". We are willing to have our young detective take on other names in the course of his investigations. But we are not willing to accept Ted Carter theory without some explanation from the Editor of the S.B.L. May we ask him to cast some light upon this (to us) momentous development in the history of the Sexton Blake story? If he refuses to do so it is obvious that he has no grounds whatsoever for making the change beyond trying to offer something different to the modern reader. Well, if he, and they, want something different, I suggest they create some new character to suit their taste. It is definitely wrong to interfere with the traditions of over forty years especially without any sort of explanation. Even if we had had a story telling us that Tinker's real name had been unearthed it would not be so bad, but to just suggest a new name and make it replace one that has been for so long almost as famous as Dr. Watson, well, that is something we cannot allow without an explanation. How about it Mr. Editor?

MEET NORMAN CONQUEST  
ALIAS WALDO THE WONDER MAN

by Jack Cook

Since E. S. Brooks revealing letter to me which was reproduced in the November issue numerous Lee-ites have written me expressing their amazement at Brooks duplicating his former St. Franks tales.

The affair doesn't stop here for I've made the momentous discovery that his detective novels published by Collins @ 8/6 are a rehash of former U.J. and Det. Weekly tales of Blake and Waldo!

At this juncture I can hear the Greyfriars men clapping their hands - but I've a little shock for them too, later! (I'm as much a Magnetite as a Leeite - this article doesn't mean to give offence, just stating the facts as I see them. I see nothing wrong in our favourite authors duplicating their former tales - I've used the same theme and plot and turned out many tales which have sold although each bearing a speaking likeness to the other. A trick of technique.)

Those of you who have read the Gay Desperado first published in 1944 will remember Hero Norman Conquest dropping from his blazing plane into the ground of a mysterious old Mansion which is surrounded by a Hill Wall. He is attacked by a savage Alsatian which he kills with his bare hands. On page 10 we find this:

"Rearing up in front of him, massive and forbidding and impressive, was the highest wall he had ever seen - - - Outlined against the sky Norman could see an assortment of deadly spikes. Not ordinary spikes but cunningly devised abominations with fish-hook like prongs viciously contorting upward ---"

Where have you read this before? I'll tell you - in Det. Weekly No. 330 June 1939, page 8, column 1 - almost word for word the story continues, but a little further on we leave "Waldo the Wonder Man"

and turn to U.J. No.1, 501 "Waldo's Way Out" and on page 4, column 1, we find this - "He shot across the bows of the speeding 'bus, meeting the demented woman halfway". Thus he saves a woman from being run over - just as he does on page 88 of the "Gay Desperado" like this - "He caught the frightened girl in his arms as he swept across the track of the fire escape --". Now we'll seek out Det. Weekly. No.340, Aug.1939, and on page 4, end of column 3, read - "He pointed, and Tinker's cheery expression changed. Protruding from behind a neighbouring patch of bracken were two feet, one with a shoe and one without, and they were curiously still". Page 129 of Gay Desperado reads almost word for word. From here on the Desperado tale follows the Det.Weekly tale almost to its end. Chief Inspector William takes the place of Sexton Blake, and pixy-like Joy Everard a poor counterpart of Tinker.

Summing up then, it seems that parts of three former tales are written up within the covers of the Gay Desperado. Some will say that this is plagiarism but this is only applicable when an author lifts passages from another author's work. It can't apply when he re-writes his own work. In a way we ought to be pleased to be able to read the old tales again - in their new, modern setting.

Let the Ed. know your views - your opinion is valued. Further revelations later - this time we scan the grand school tales of Charles Hamilton - with rather surprising and unexpected results!

SEMI-PERMANENTS OF THE SECOND SERIES (PART II)  
by William Golcombe

Another character to be featured in several of Warwick Jardine's stories was Big Tad Flanagan, a big, breezy young man who was always losing his heart to a girl only to see her marry someone else. He made his first appearance in S.B.L. No.530 (2nd series) "The Seaside Crime".

One of the most original characters to appear in the 2nd series was Captain Dack, the huge, genial skipper of the "Mary Ann Trinder". This two-fisted son of the sea wasn't too particular as to the cargo he carried, but usually drew the line at murder and often ended up by helping Sexton Blake to round up a gang of crooks while getting a nice rake-off for himself. Captain Dack was not an out-and-out crook but had more than a touch of the old-time buccaneer about him. His creator was John Hunter (Peter Meriton) and he made his first appearance in No. 549 "Crooks Cargo". He was dropped from Blake stories early in the 3rd series, which didn't improve the quality of Hunter's stories to any marked degree.

Last, but not least of these semi-permanents to appear came from the pen of Anthony Parsons and were two new Scotland Yard friends of Blake. Superintendent Claudius Venner, of the immaculate attire, a genius at self-advertisement, lover of bright lights and beautiful ladies, but nevertheless a shrewd and capable officer, and his companion, Det. Sergt. Belford, the antithesis of Venner in manner, whose collar never matched his shirt but whose agile brain solved the problem that Venner got the credit for.

It is interesting to note that in No. 402, "The Mystery of the Old Age Pensioner", George Hamilton Teed introduced to S.B.L. readers Baron Von Kravitch a character who first appeared in No. 3 of "Det. Weekly" and was featured in a number of the early stories of that paper. The unselfish efforts of the unhappy Elsa Von Kravitch to save her crooked and ruthless father from his criminal misdeeds made a fine series of stories, but if my memory serves me right Elsa did not appear in the story mentioned above but the Baron was teamed up with George Marsden Plummer.

Thus ends these few brief notes on some of the modern characters of the Blake saga.

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11

