

The

Collectors'

Digest

June 1st

No. 18

(Vol: 2)



From Left to Right:

C. Mollard

- Skinner

J. Parrott

J. W. Gray

M. Macmillan

E. Keeling

S. Hayward

V. Page

Geo. R. Whitson

Eric Payne

R. Whittier

K. Blythe

G. Hall

B. Wheeler

M. Pughman

Photo taken by Mr. J. Roberts at 3rd Session Meeting 2, 3, 4-8.

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Boys Herald - " 5 "

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Young Folks Weekly Budget.

Varieties - ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Boys Realm - ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Etc. etc. - ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

JOHN MEDCRAFT,

66, Woodlands Road, Ilford, Essex.

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“The Collectors' Digest”



(Vol.2) No.18.

Price 1s.1d.

Post Free

JUNE 1948

Editor, Miscellaneous Section

Herbert Leckenby, Telephone Exchange,

C/o Central Registry, Northern Command, York

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR:

Of a truth the papers which play such a big part in these pages, and in our lives, are much in the news these days. For instance, the paragraphs reproduced here appeared in the "Daily Herald" on May 3rd.

Then a day or two later, the last three words in Ian Mackay's Diary in the "News Chronicle" caught my eye. The words were "Magnet and Gem"! "What's this?" thought I, then settled down to see what this lively

C. B. FRY, the cricketer, who has for 40 years directed the nautical training ship Mercury at Southampton, is writing an introduction for "The Penny Blood," a book to be published soon by E. S. Turner.

It is a study of the famous characters of boyhood—Nelson, Lee, Saxton Blake (whose detective adventures have appeared weekly for 65 years, and now total 150,000,000 words), Jack Hartaway, Billy Bunter, Deadwood Dick and all those.

Fry tells me he is writing the introduction from his experience of teaching young sailors in the Mercury. He believes that just should let a boy read what he likes; it will lead him gradually to good reading. He is equally sure that Dick Saxton does no harm.

columnist had to say about the popular two. Well, he was talking about the books one finds in wayside hotels. And he finished like this:

"If ever I come to run a hotel there will be a small bookcase in every bedroom. It will contain the books I have mentioned and a few secular ones as well. Like Shakespeare, Pepys, Kempis, Boswell, Palgrave, Mrs. Beeton, Agate's Egos, Bradshaw, Whittaker, and a bound volume of the Magnet and Gem."

Good for Ian! He seems to be one of us. Even though he was writing in whimsical vein, I think he honestly believed the famous pair had earned a place in English literature. I can think of quite a few fellows who would like to pat him on the back.

And, when we find one of the most famous names in English sport writing an introduction to a book dealing with boys' papers one feels they are indeed getting a place in the sun. Readers will perhaps be interested to hear that I sent a copy of the May "C.D." to Mr. E. S. Turner and asked him if he could give us any idea of the date of publication. In a reply just received, Mr. Turner says the publishers, Michael Joseph, Ltd., hope to have it out by mid-September, with the idea of making it a Christmas present book. We hope to review it first opportunity.

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In a recent issue we said we were hoping to publish a list of Mr. E. S. Brook's books in stiff covers. However, it's not to be, for Jack Murtegh, of New Zealand, and Robert Beyth, of the Nelson Lee Column, who both had the same idea, have been told by Mr. Brooks that he does not think readers of the St. Frank's stories would be interested in his later books, and therefore he would rather a list did not appear in C.D. I must confess I cannot see Mr. Brook's reasoning at all. One would have thought he would only have been too glad to still have the support of those who were such faithful followers of his in the days when he wrote mainly for the growing boy. And even if his later stories have not the same appeal, what harm would there be in publishing a list. Surely it cannot be that he is ashamed of the stories which once made for him thousands of friends all over the world? Why,

after all, as Blakians showed a short time ago, the gulf between the stories which appeared in the twopenny weeklies and those which now can be found on the shelves of the twopenny libraries, is not very wide.

However, we bow to Mr. Brook's wishes.

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Quite a number of entries were received for the little competition "Why I Collect the Story Papers", with a prize of a year's subscription kindly paid by Mr. H. A. Smith. They were quite good efforts, making it rather difficult to choose the best. However, the winner will be announced in the next issue.

Meanwhile, have a go at the crossword with £1 prize generously given by Mr. Eric Fayne. It will be found to have a few necessary alternatives. Entry form will be found on a separate sheet in this issue.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: 50 "Boys' Cinemas", 250 New Series "Nelson Lees", Holiday Annuals, Vol. 7 Boys' Friends (not bound), Magnets and Gems. Also a few Old Series Nelson Lees, triumphs and B.O.Ps. H. A. Smith, 13 New Road, Scole, Diss, Norfolk.

WANTED: Ferrers Lord stories from Boys' Friend 3d. and 4d. Library. Henry J. H. Bertlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

WANTED: 5/- each for Magnet 692, "Mauleverer's Peril"; Magnet 903, Sports Week at Greyfriars; Popular 251, Mauly-Swot. 50 Gems for exchange between 532-1100. Miss E. B. Flinders, Rose View, Gosmore Road, Nr. Hitchin, Herts.

EDITOR'S NOTE

So far as I am aware, Mr. Johnson is the only member of the collector's circle who has had the good fortune to meet Mr. Frank Richards. I feel sure, therefore, that the account of his visit will be read with no little interest.

A VISIT TO FRANK RICHARDS

by

THOMAS ARNOLD JOHNSON, L.R.A.M., A.R.M.C.M.

On April 5th, I had occasion to visit Mr. Richards at his home, "ROSE LAWN", Kingsgate-on-Sea, to discuss various business details regarding my GREYFRIARS SUITE for piano solo, and also to convey some private recordings of the latter which I had made for him at his request, into his safe keeping.

I commenced my long train journey from Victoria at 10.30 a.m., arriving at Broadstairs at 1 p.m., had lunch at a cafe close to the bus stop from which my bus would start at 1.40 to convey me to my destination - Kingsgate. It was quite a short run, passing through some lovely Kentish scenery, and at last, the sight of the blue sea conveyed to me the knowledge that I was approaching the master's abode. The bus stopped almost outside the well-known house - "ROSE LAWN". With great excitement I opened the gate and timidly walked up to the front door and knocked. Edith, - (at least, I presumed it was that good lady, - I knew afterwards that my surmise was correct, and that her surname was Hood) opened it, and asked me inside. After an apology from me about arriving a little earlier than I was expected, she led me in, saying that Mr. Hamilton had been resting, but that he would be down presently, and so I made myself comfortable in the master's "den", sitting in an easy chair before a log fire, and partaking of tea and cake, which Edith so kindly brought in for me.

AT LAST THE GREAT MOMENT ARRIVED — and through the door Mr. Richards (his appearance so well known to me through his

photographs,) with outstretched hand, which I heartily grasped. I was at last face to face with the person who had created BILLY BUNTER, - the person I had always admired so much. I shall never forget this first handshake. Mr. Richards looked well, happy and contented, and as he sat before me on the other side of the fireplace, I could see the whole array of his famous characters all around him in my imagination. Whenever Edith was required, Mr. Richards had an original method of banging a coal scuttle with a poker, -- which made a sound loud enough to waken the dead, but which served its purpose to the full however, bringing Edith in, with a smiling face, to know what was required of her.

We talked and chatted about old stories, and music, (for Mr. Richards is a keen music lover,) and things in general for over an hour and a half, whilst he smoked his pipe, and made numerous spontaneous wise-cracks on the way. The records I had brought were played over, and it was a joy indeed to behold Mr. Richards' face as each number was unfolded on the air. The swish of Quelchy's cane, the Bunter "cackle", Lord Mauleverer's yawn, the Bounder's swagger and defiance, Alonzo Todd's sentimental meanderings, (all portrayed in my music) brought a smile, and sometimes a hearty laugh from the author of those famous characters as he sat there, oblivious of all but the music. He complimented me upon the way I had so ingeniously portrayed each character, and I knew that my little token of high esteem was greatly appreciated by him. I know now, that those records will give Mr. Richards many hours of pleasure, and I was glad that I had suggested doing them for him. I was amply repaid for my efforts by watching his features, and the genuine and sincere appreciation displayed by him. Lady Jane, the cat, (I must not forget her), came and sat on my shoulder as we listened, and so I found that we had other interests in common -- CATS, and gardening, for I learned that during the morning Mr. Richards had been planting bulbs. After a discussion regarding the Suite and the possibility of having it published, followed by a little recital on the piano, I realised that my time was growing short.

I came away from Rose Lawn with the feeling that I had been in the presence of a great genius, - an author who would always live through his stories - an ageless person who was imbued with the spirit and gaiety of perpetual youth.

Mr. Richards is still young in mind, and I know that through his characters, — his dream children, as I prefer to call them, — he will always be with us. He speaks of all his characters as if they really DID exist, and many times during our conversation, I expected the door to open and reveal Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry in the flesh.

We older schoolboys will always be grateful to Mr. Richards, — we owe him a great debt, for through his stories he gave us a lasting pleasure, and a rich heritage which can never die.

May he enjoy the sunset of his life in happy contentment, together with the knowledge that thousands of his readers, both young and old, wish him good health, joy, happiness, prosperity, and an undying interest in all that is clean and sincere.

Thank you, Mr. Richards, for all your years of devotion to the schoolboy. Good luck in all your future ventures. You have the firm and staunch support of all past readers of the MAGNET.

Readers may be interested to know that there is every possibility of the first Greyfriars Suite being published at a later date.

T. A. Johnson, L.R.A.M., A.R.M.C.M.
Raby Cottage, Raby Park,
Neston, Warral, Cheshire.

THE OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

A meeting took place on Sunday, May 2nd, at the Modern School Annexe, Surbiton Road, Kingston. Muster included Messrs. R. Blythe, L. Packman, J.W. Geal, C. Holland-Skinner, F. Keeling, B. Whiter, J. Robyns, M. Hall, M. Haswell, B. Haswell, E. Fayne, J. Parrott, Mr. and Mrs. Whiter, while Vincent Page, the youngest collector of all, was present part of the time.

Photographs of the Members were taken in the garden by

Mr. Robyns and Mr. B. Haswell.

Mr. Fayne acted as chairman of the meeting, and expressed the pleasure of the club at the presence of two new members, - Mr. Robyns, who had travelled from Brighton, and Mr. Geal of Kingston. Book prices were discussed, and it was eventually agreed that a certain scale of prices should operate between all club members. By keeping good faith between themselves, the club believes that prices can be regulated to some extent.

The next item on the agenda was the debate on Greyfriars and St. Jim's versus St. Frank's. The arguments of Mr. Joseph Baguley, whose letter appeared in the C.D., were considered.

Then followed a competition in the form of a "quiz", - a list of questions on the various papers and characters in which the club is interested. Winner was Mr. Whiter, with Mr. Haswell second. Parcels of Gems and Magnets were awarded as prizes.

Members were then invited to give a brief talk on the papers which interested them the most. Mr. Packman gave the history of the "Popular" in an informative talk which was followed by members with keen interest. Mr. Fayne then gave a brief review of the ups and downs of his pet paper, the Gem.

Welcome refreshments were now served by the Matron of the Modern School, and, when the inner man was satisfied, an exchange session, of benefit to many, commenced.

The meeting broke up just before ten o'clock, and Mr. Blythe proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Fayne for his work as host for the May gathering. It was decided that the next meeting shall be held on the first Sunday in June at the home of Mr. Packman at East Dulwich. It was proposed and agreed that future meetings should be held on a rote, successively at Mr. Packman's home at East Dulwich, Mr. Whiter's home at Wood Green, and Mr. Fayne's home at Kingston-on-Thames. This arrangement will mean that meetings should be in reasonable reach of all living within easy reach of London, and a member who finds himself with a fairly long journey for one meeting may find it a fairly short one for the next meeting.

A Dinner is to be held for the Club, at Surbiton, in September.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS: The third meeting of the London members was evidently as successful as its predecessors and a good time seems to have been had by all. Seeing Mr. Eric Fayne, that man of ideas, was host, that was a foregone conclusion.

It will be seen that a dinner is to be held in September. No doubt all those members who would like to be there will keep the date in mind. It should be a great occasion.

It may be that those who were mainly responsible for starting these London meetings feel they have not yet succeeded in doing all they set out to achieve, but they certainly have the satisfaction of knowing that, though some of their schemes have given rise to all sorts of opinions, they certainly have created an enormous amount of interest. My post-bag proves that. Moreover, they have brought collectors (the London ones at any rate) together more than ever before. Witness the photographs which were taken at the meeting. To me they are more interesting than I can say, and since getting copies I have looked at them again and again. At the moment of writing this I am hoping you will see a reproduction in this issue of one of them, probably on the cover. Not the least interesting thing about them is that they prove how our hobby appeals to all ages, from a cheeky youngster in a junior form to men who have left their schooldays behind them quite a number of years ago.

I might also mention that post-cards (8d. each) can be obtained from Mr. Mavin Haswell.

They are well worth the money, if only for the reason that the photographs are graced by the presence of charming Mrs. Robert Whiter. There'll be no differences of opinion about that!

Well, when I study the pile of letters which have reached me on the price question, it is plainly evident that the cause of most of the trouble, the nigger in the woodpile, the real villain of the piece, is - "The Magnet". There are other papers which cause a little heartburning, but with the Magnet well, let me put it this way. Picture an auction with a desirable semi-detached villa up for sale with vacant possession; the people assembled all young married couples, with all the wives living with their mother-in-laws, or in

places where half-a-dozen women have to use the same cooking facilities. Can you blame the auctioneer if his hammer doesn't fall until a pre-war £600 house has reached the region of £2,500? Well, that's akin to the situation when Magnets come into the market; and when they happen to be the red-covered ones of yesteryear, well, then you can no more prevent the bidding being brisk than Canute of old could stop the tide coming in.

Nevertheless, there is a gleam of hope even for the Magnet. Since our last issue I have heard of more of them being brought into the ring from cellars and attics. And down in sunny Devon one of the clan could hardly believe his eyes when he saw quite a nice little pile on a bookstall. They weren't there long! And he learned that if he had been there earlier there would have been quite a lot more. True, they were numbers near the end of the run, even then a rare sight these days.

And there's another surprise in this issue - Mr. John Medcraft's advertisement. If anyone had told me, even twenty years ago, that there was an opportunity of obtaining long runs of the papers of my own youth like those I should have found it difficult to believe.

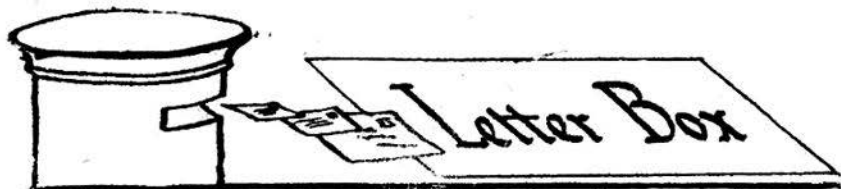
It just shows you that you never know what's going to turn up. So there's no need to get despondent, lads of London town.

WANTED: Early issues of Gem, Magnet, Pluck, Dreadnought. A few Magnets and Gems for disposal and red-covered Magnets for exchange only. Eric Fayne, 23 Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

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

WANTED: Maxwell Scott's detective stories. Sale: "Juvenile Drama" by George Speaight; Modern Boys' Annual, 1938, Geo. Rochester, etc. John Herman, 51 Burleigh Gardens, Southgate, London, N.14.

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Magnets and Nelson Lees, 1919-30. Good condition. M. Haswell, 19a London Road, Morden, Surrey.



No Stonewalling for Mr. Baguley

"Moorings", Middle Hill,
Pensilva, S.E. Cornwall.
20th April, 194

Dear Editor,

I have no wish to score debating points against Messrs. Fayne and Hawes, whose letters appeared in your April issue. I am sure the misquotation by Mr. Fayne, ("stories" and "Plots" are two different things,) and misrepresentation by Mr. Hawes, (the best fiction is usually very realistic in details) could easily have been forecast. What surprised me was the support from Mr. McGreevy. Thanks, Mac!

The fact remains that every word of my original letter was carefully considered — by me, I mean: evidently not by Messrs. F. and H. There really is no reply to be made to it. Expressions of loyalty (see Mr. Whiter) do not add much unless accompanied by reasoned statements of known facts.

What a confession we have had, — that he knows of no writer whose work is of importance outside his own limited field! What a monstrous assertion that is! If it is true, what of T.S. Eliot, Graham Greene, W. Somerset Maugham, Ignazio Silone, Sean O'Casey, Sinclair Lewis, Priestley, Huxley — no need to go on, but an intelligent child will know that it would be a very long list.

Those who troubled to read my letter with an impartial mind surely saw clearly enough its motive — that fatuous and fulsome praise does credit neither to the giver nor recipient. Certainly I read the books, for relaxation: but they are read with a due sense of proportion: much better school stories were

written, for example, by a now not overpraised writer whose initials are P.G.W.

Is Mr. Fayne expecting us to swallow the whole of his ridiculous suggestion that sales alone are the criterion of merit? That seems to be the meaning of his concluding paragraph. If this were so, then the best newspaper that ever existed, is the "News of the World"; and Shaw and Shakespeare wrote in vain.

JOSEPH BAGULEY.

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Sanderstead, Surrey.

3rd May, 1948.

On Mr. Baguley's Side

Dear Sir,

Although I am a purely Hamiltonian Collector, I think we must be fair to Mr. Baguley, so I am - rather unexpectedly I imagine - taking up the cudgels in defence of that gentleman. Only one part of the letter I will criticise, i.e. the Magnet being more essentially interesting to an average small boy between 9 and 15. Why as low as 9, and why not higher than 15?

For the rest, I think we blind ourselves if we fail to recognise the unreality of many of the stories and incidents.

However, I have always loved them and always shall.

Yours sincerely,

BERNARD PRIME.

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Call it a Draw

Alverthorpe, Wakefield.

Dear Editor,

I have sat back quietly without comment during the publishing of the last few C.Ds., but with some impatience with those readers who have made it a battleground to resolve on the merits or otherwise of C.H. and E.S.B. Nothing has been said by either side which could be of material help to any collector. Let us all then, wash it out, and have peace in the home at last, and not least, get on to more articles of constructive value.

TOM ARMITAGE.

An Open Letter To My Two Favourite Authors

By Jack Cook.

Dear Guvnors,

For many years I've collected, read and enjoyed your yarns, both school and tec. Harry Wharton & Co. always taught Honesty, Loyalty, while Nelson Lee made me Observant, Courageous and Discerning. I'm shocked to hear of such phrases as Malice, Unfairness, Accusing, Reckless Attack, etc. being attached to my name - just because I try to tell the truth! I think that if you read the Waldo article carefully you'll find each passage quoted chapter and verse.

But as I've said before, I see nothing wrong in an author duplicating his former plots, themes - even characterisation. Every fiction writer is aware that there are only a certain number of Dramatic Situations - according to Geo. Poltis' famous work, "The 36 Dramatic Situations" there is only this number, but from them a writer can evolve literally millions of plots. I do applaud you therefore in giving us so many good yarns from the same number of stock plots year in and year out.

Let me stress again that my articles don't mean to give offence - like Johnny Bull I'm plain and outspoken - I don't talk about "Small Beer", "Principal throwing in the sponge" etc. I leave that sort of thing where it belongs - but it's strange that you haven't noticed these comments! Yet when I cite phrases, incidents etc. which you have written - you become perturbed.

Sorry, guvs, but I'll always read your yarns whether you re-write them or not.

Yours sincerely,
JACK COOK.

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A HEARTBREAKING STORY

by William L. Bawden

You may or may not know it, but for the last two years I have been running an amateur magazine by the name of the 'Viaduct'. Some time ago I got permission to reprint any two 'Magnet' stories from the A.P., but have only now decided

to make use of it. I run it as a serial on the two back pages. It is "Magnet" No. 1,434, "Fishy's Holiday Stunt".

I recently hurried up to the printers a short distance away from my home. Going up the short flight of worn stairs I found the short, tubby, printer of 50-odd in his office at the top.

"Proofs ready?" I asked.

"C— is just finishing them," he answered.

We waited.

I idly picked up the copy of the "Magnet" on his desk from which they were copying and mentioned how prices had changed. "Look," I said, "28 pages, all that for 2d! And to-day for a quarter of that reading matter you have to pay about 1/6!"

"Oh, that's nothing," he replied, "I remember when they were only $\frac{1}{2}$ d!"

I gazed at him. Up to now it had not occurred to me he had ever heard of the "Magnet" before bringing that copy there. Come to think of it I couldn't remember ever having told him I collected them. "Yes, sir" he went on breezily, "I remember the very first copy coming out and buying it down at H—'s — that's B—'s now. It had a red cover..." He rambled on. Considering that was some forty years ago he had a good memory, but then came the shock!

"Yes, sir," he repeated, "I took them up each week; I read them again and again. I knew them so well I could tell them off by heart, almost word for word! I had five copies of No. 1's. I WAS LOOKING AT THEM NOT SO LONG AGO."

I nearly fell down.

He continued: "I had them stacked up in a cupboard, hundreds of them..."

I grabbed his arm in a frenzy. "And you've still got them," I asked, "—have you?"

"Oh, no, I BURNT THEM!"

"When?"

"Oh, a month or so ago."

"But why didn't you tell me?" I cried.

"You?" He looked surprised. "Why?"

"I collect them!"

"Well, fancy that, if you had only MENTIONED it I'd have been glad to give them to you. You could have come up and took them away by the cartload! I also had a lot of "Gems" and "Plucks" with the first stories of Gussy & Co. I remember him arriving, and Sexton Blake, he was in the Union Jack. I had a lot of those too...."

"Why ever did you burn them?" I sighed.

"Well, the wife was grumble, grumble...."

I left in a daze. To think I had been going there for TWO years, and to think if I had only mentioned it, what a rich prize I would have had.

I guess you can imagine my feelings.

His name is James Roberts of Prater & Co. He also had a lot of Answers and Boy's Friend.

I think it's a heartbreaking story.

(Well, there's a hard luck story if ever there was one. When I received it from Dick, as he is known at Redruth, I had an urge to ring him up and sympathise. Even though we were talking over 400 miles or so of wire, I could detect the rueful note in his voice as he went over it again, and no wonder. H.L.)

GREYFRIARS SCHOOLBOYS OWNS WANTED between 135-261. 2/6 each offered, 4/- each for Nos. 191, 193, 201, 203 and 209. 24 Magnets 1100-1200 and a few Schoolboy's Owns for Exchange. Gordon Thompson, 85 Deerpark Road, Belfast.

WANTED: Nelson Lee Library, original series No.16 and onwards to No. 50. Boys' Own Library 3d. Nugget Library, Empire and Diamond Library. Particulars to W. H. Clough, 3 Fonthill Grove, Sale, Manchester.

WANTED URGENTLY: Nelson Lees, 1st series (1917) 124, 125, 126, 128; Gems, 1111, 1115, also Wanted, Gems 1101-1110, 1248 to 1260. L. Packman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

REBELLION!

A description of the barring-out stories
of the Nelson Lee Library. By Robert Blythe.
(Continued)

The Governors come to St. Franks and during the resulting enquiry the Head has a stroke and is compelled to leave the school (!!)

The Governors decide to put a retired Naval Commander in charge to help restore order.

By a mistake his butler, a Captain Boom, is assumed to be the Commander. Capt. Boom thinks he can quell the rebellion, but his methods are more suited for the Navy than to a boys' school, with the result that all the Masters resign. By this time all the school is in revolt, and with the absence of the Masters the less tractable element get out of hand, and the school is in danger of being wrecked. Nevertheless, Mr. Stokes (who hasn't left with the other masters), manages to restore order, and promises the school that their demands will be satisfied. Another enquiry is held, this time the true facts about Sinclair's hold over Mr. Stokes is brought to light, with the result that Sinclair is expelled. Sinclair, however, is instrumental in saving another's life and is pardoned. Once more the school returns to normal.

It is Handforth who supplies the reason for the last of the "barring out" stories in what may be termed the old style. Merrell and Marriott, two of the more unpleasant characters, are responsible for a particularly ill-natured joke upon Mr. Pyecraft, the Fourth Form master. Handforth and his two friends are accused, and the Head decides to punish them by flogging. Handforth, however, refuses to be flogged, and Church and McClure barricade themselves in their study. Of course, they are soon evicted, but the rest of the Remove, knowing the truth, decide to help them. The school stores are commandeered and the "barring-out" commences in earnest.

General Carfax, one of the Governors, tells the Head that he is not using stringent enough measures to bring the "barring out" to an end and the Head, therefore, (yes, I'm afraid so) decides to leave the school until the revolt is over. The General conducts himself as if he were commanding a military offensive, but in spite of everything the rebels hold out,

and the barring-out is brought to a successful conclusion only when Merrell and Marriott are forced to confess. Handforth, naturally, is cleared, and all parties very pleased with themselves, go home for the Christmas Holidays.

That more or less brings the story of the "barrings-out" to an end. To be sure, there are two more, but they belong to the Second New Series and most Lee supporters prefer to forget them. Still, for the record - Nos.51-54 tells how a gangster from Chicago, called Millionaire Mike, takes over the school and instals his gang as Masters. But the less said about this series the better. An archaeologist named Professor Ogleby is the cause of the trouble in the last original barring-out told in the Nelson Lee. (No.384-387). He discovers a Roman encampment under the playing fields and being a Governor, decides to excavate. The boys, to protect the playing fields, stage a revolt on them to prevent Prof.Ogleby digging them up. They win of course. To round things off, apart from the Hunter reprint (Nos.10-18, 3rd New Series) there are two other stories. In one, (65, 1st New Series), the juniors hold out in a power station against a certain Otto Lorenzo who has gone into the slavery business.

Lastly, there is a short description of a revolt by the Moor View girls, (No.157, 1st New Series) but that is a brief affair, and the results of a practical joke played upon them by the St.Franks Remove. Here we have the complete revolt series and at least 8 of them are among the best stories that E.S. Brooks ever penned.

WANTED: Schoolboy's Own Library No's - 147 - 161 - 177 - 213, - 227 - 229; Magnets No's 1296, -1334, 1439, 1483, and Holiday stories prior to 1930. Will buy or offer liberal exchanges of S.O.L.s (inc. earlier ones), Magnets, few Gems etc. (inc. few 1918-20 issues). J. Walsh, 345 Stanley Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool 20.

The Nelson Lee Column

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

A couple of months ago I promised to give a list of books written by E.S.B., but unfortunately I shall have to cancel that as he tells me he would rather I didn't, as in his opinion none would be interested. I don't agree - but his wishes must be respected.

In the last issue I gave a list of Masters and details of the Ancient House, and this month I shall deal with the rest of the school:

West House: Colours; Mauve and Yellow. Head Prefect, Arthur Morrow. Capt. of West House Remove, Reginald Pitt. Matron, Mrs. Carr. Page-boy, Rodgers.

Modern House: Colours, Green and Gold. Head Prefect, Walter Reynolds. Capt. of Fourth Form, Bob Christine. Matron, Mrs. Riley. Page-boy, Sprott.

East House: Colours, Black and Orange. Head Prefect, Simon Kenmore. Capt. East House Fourth, Timothy Armstrong. Matron, Mrs. Potter. Page-boy, Jelks.

Round and about the school: The School House contains only the classrooms, laboratories, etc. The 3rd, 5th, and 6th are boarded equally among the four houses. The Remove occupy the Ancient and West House, while the Fourth occupies the Modern and East Houses.

In an interesting letter J.P. of London asks several questions which I think may be of general interest.

1. The first Christmas No. of the N.L. and the one introducing Jim the Penman, Prof. Zingrave, and Eileen Dare was No.78 C.S. "A Christmas of Peril".

2. The story containing the very first reference to St. Frenks and explaining why they decided to go there was given in No.III O.S. "The Yellow Shadow".

3. Numbers of the N.L. containing stories of the Black Wold are as follows: O.S. No's 17,19,22,24,26,30,31,34,36 40,61,107,108.

L.P. makes a suggestion which may fulfil a need, but it will be a long job. He would like me to supply a list of the titles of the N.L. from No.1. I propose therefore to give ten a month. Anyone who would like to know the titles of any special series should contact me at the address given at the head of this article.

Here are the first ten, anyway.

- No.1. The Mystery of Limehouse Reach.
- No.2. The Case of the Secret Room.
- No.3. The Clue of the Straw Sailor's Hat.
- No.4. The Case of the Interned Detective.
- No.5. The Great Submarine Mystery.
- No.6. Stolen Property.
- No.7. A miscarriage of Justice.
- No.8. The Convicts' Vendetta.
- No.9. Nelson Lee. Cracksman.
- No.10. Shadowed by Two.

I had the pleasure of meeting Granville Waine recently and he tells me that he also has a copy of No.1. That brings the total to six known copies. Not exactly plentiful, are they?

Before I close this month, I should like to remind N.L. collectors once again that this column is being written for their benefit, and apart from a few more from L.P. I've answered all questions put to me. So how about some more queries? Pile 'em on, the more the merrier! Also, what about the most popular series?

Advertise in the C.D.

EARLY EFFORTS OF THE FAMOUSBy Ron. Galloway

It is fascinating to dip far back into the past and unearth the literary efforts of people then little known but whose names are now household words.

In 1910 JOHN MASEFIELD penned what must surely be the 'ace' of all smuggling yarns - "JIM DAVIS". This appeared in serialised form in 'CHATTERBOX' for that year, and this brilliant story simply pulses with exciting incidents; no genuine lover of Boys journalism should deny himself the pleasure of reading it.

Jim, (whom we are told was born in the year 1800) gets mixed up with a gang smuggling French lace and brandy across the English Channel, and the battle of wits (and sometimes more lethal weapons) between the latter and the Preventive Officers provides thrilling reading. Jim is earlier befriended by Marsh Gorsuch, a member of the gang with Gypsy blood in his veins, and in retaliation for our young hero having engineered the escape of two Preventive Officers whom the gang had captured, Gorsuch threatens to "take Jim to sea with him and make a man of him". Later in the story this actually happens, and the chapters leading up to the climax when the gang are surprised and outnumbered by a superior force of Preventive Officers are superb.

I like to think that Masefield used this splendid story as a stepping stone, as he later branched out into adult literature, whilst his poems are of course world famous.

Digressing for a moment, I think I may remark without fear of contradiction how greatly enhanced and more interesting a story becomes when serialised in one of our popular Annuals, by reason of the pictures which accompany it. There are nearly 40 magnificent full page black and white illustrations with which "JIM DAVIS" is embellished, by an Artist whose name unfortunately I cannot decipher. In the book version of the story, we have to be satisfied with one or two small illustrations.

The 'CAPTAIN' for 1909 was noteworthy for a splendid story in serialised form by JOHN BUCHAN entitled "THE BLACK GENERAL". This stirring and intensely interesting story depicts the

breath-taking adventures of a young Scotsman (it would have to be a Scotsman of course in the true Buchan fashion) who is instrumental in foiling a Native uprising in South Africa, whose chief instigator is a Black Preacher.

If my memory is not playing me false, I believe this narrative was later published in book form as adult literature with the impressive title of "PRESTER JOHN", although I am not quite certain of the latter. Possibly some of your other readers may be able to confirm this.

The interesting and informative way in which Buchan writes of the African terrain, where many of the leading incidents of the story are laid, is accounted for by the fact that in his earlier years he occupied an administrative post with the South African Government.

The inimitable, one-and-only P.G.WODEHOUSE was a frequent and welcome contributor to the pages of the 'CAPTAIN' in the years preceding World War I, his story "THE EIGHTEEN CARAT KID" appearing therein as a serial in 1912.

It would seem that Editors do, from time to time, have such "luscious fare" served up to them by contributors that no matter what they choose the result is bound to be a super-volume. It was so in 1912 'CAPTAIN', and not the least of the three brilliant serials appearing therein was Wodehouse's story. All Collectors, I suppose, have "pet" volumes - volumes which, perhaps due to the appeal of some of the stories or articles, rank higher in their affections than others. The 1912 'CAPTAIN' is one of such with me. Wodehouse's yarn centres round Ogden P.Ford, a very very precocious young son of an American millionaire, who, in an effort to escape the costly kidnappings to which the lad is frequently subjected, decides to send him to an English school, which is one of the private type situated in a large country house in its own grounds. Unknown to Mr. Ogden Senior, one of America's slickest kidnappers gets wind of the scheme, crosses to England and succeeds in obtaining a position as Butler at the school. The whole thing is brilliant farce, with a dash of melodrama here and there when one of the Masters is instrumental in saving the lad from the clutches of the kidnapper and his accomplices. The tale ends, I believe, with Mr. Ogden

offering the kidnapper a permanent and well-paid position to foil other kidnappers, on the well-known principle of "set a thief to catch a thief".

H. DE VERE STACPOOL (of "Blue Lagoon" fame) wrote an adventure story entitled "BIRD CAY", which appeared as a serial in 'CHATTERBOX' for 1913. As I have not yet had the privilege of reading this, I can make no comments at the moment.

If this article brings nostalgic memories to some of the "Old Boys", I shall feel that the time spent in its preparation has been amply repaid.

R. Galloway.

STOP PRESS: Extract from a Frank Richards letter.
"Negotiations are once more on foot for putting the first Bunter book on the air and the screen. This time it seems to be taking shape, but you never can tell."

Photographs of the Members present
at the Meeting of the Old Boys Book Club
held at London on 2nd May, 1948. may be
obtained from Mr. B. Haswell.



THE ROUND TABLE

Do events taking place in this modern world remind you of Sexton Blake stories of the past? I find, very frequently, that a yarn printed many years ago has a direct bearing upon some modern occurrence and it is particularly interesting to take note of the present trouble in Palestine as an example of what I mean. Turning to the Sunday newspaper this Whitsun week I read of the ending of the British Mandate in the Holy Land and immediately my thoughts flew back to the year 1925 and to a wonderful yarn by the late Gwyn Evans entitled "The Case of the Wandering Jew". (see U.J. No.1130 dated 6/6/25). This story, very topical at the time of its appearance, seemed just as much so to-day, for, on turning it up in my U.J. files the first thing I saw was a reference to the Mandate, the only difference being that it has only just been accepted by the British. There seemed to be just as much turmoil and strife in that land of Arab and Jew as there is to-day and provided Blake with some ticklish problems. How good it was to read about dear old "Splash" Page giving his impressions of the "New Jerusalem" - of his meeting with Blake in the Holy Land and their subsequent adventures together with tinker. How they stopped a possible revolt threatened by the arrival of the mythical Wanderer.

If you have this story in your collection I advise you to re-read it now. It is typical of Sexton Blake of the 1920's and also very much so of that clever writer Gwyn Evans who, besides being one of the most popular young men in Fleet Street at that time was also an authority on matters relating to the Middle East. If you want to have proof of this you can refer to his special article in the Detective Supplement of U.J. No.1130 entitled "Modern Jerusalem - the City of Contrasts". I should very much like to see Blake in modern 1948 Palestine. How fitting it would be for that popular current author, Anthony Persons, to write a story or two with a Middle East setting. He has done so in the past and has proved that he too has enough knowledge of that part of the world to give us some exciting Blake adventures therein.

Did you spot my "faux pas" in the last "Round Table"? I told you that I was handing this feature over to Bill Colcombe this month for him to tell you about some of the "semi-Permanents of the Second Series". Of course he had already done so (see C.D. No's 14 and 15). I offer my apologies for this error which went quite un-noticed until after the publication of No.17. While on the subject let me say that my recent declaration that I intended to make "Blakiana" consist solely of "The Round Table" has not met with the approval I had hoped and so, with effect from this issue we are reverting to the old style and I trust that all Blake fans will now be satisfied with the layout of the section.

Once again I have to congratulate Eric R.Parker upon two excellent covers for the May issues of the S.B.L. Although the new layout does not give him the same scope as hitherto he has succeeded in making the "three quarters design" most effective and my only regret is that he is not now doing those Page 1 heading sketches which used to be a feature of the Library but which are now entirely cut out. I notice that the companion publications "Woman's World" and "Schoolgirls Own" Libraries both have these sketches and cannot understand why the Blake stories should be treated differently. Evidently Mr.Parker is not lacking in talent as witness his excellent black and white sketches in such publications as "The Knockout". How about it, Mr. Editor?

Cherio for now.

Here we present a new article from the pen of Wilfred Darwin who contributed "Introducing George Marsden Plummer" in C.D. No.3 over 12 months ago. We are sure all readers will welcome his return to our pages.

FAVOURITES OF THE PAST

Some popular U.J. characters and the man who created them

by Wilfred Darwin

Looking back through UNION JACK history it is difficult to find a more popular or more talented contributor to its pages than George Hamilton Teed. He created many famous personalities during his many years with the old paper and I would like, as the subject of this article, to say a little about some of them.

Teed was not a writer of the conventional type of detective story, but made his name with several long series of yarns of foreign adventure.

In the very early days of the U.J. Sexton Blake invariably got his man and was more than a match for any wrongdoer who happened to cross his path. There was a finality about each story and the capture of the criminal was a foregone conclusion. Later, however, a change came about, for a series of stories was found to be preferable to single ones, with a much longer run for the criminal in consequence.

As we all know, the exploits of some of the famous criminal characters introduced to UNION JACK readers by Mr. Teed covered a good number of years and also provided material for a good many stories. Take George Marsden Plummer for example. It would indeed be difficult to estimate how many issues of the U.J. or S.B.L. have been devoted to this character in the past.

That a series of stories was favoured to single ones was proved by their popularity. The "Yellow Beetle" series, for example, which started in 1911 was still going strong as late as 1932. If longevity is a good test, here is proof enough. Prince Wu Ling, the exalted head of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle, was undoubtedly one of Teed's finest criminal characters. I know of no greater power for evil in the whole world of fiction, unless it be the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu. This famous Sax Rohmer character and Wu Ling had a great deal in common. They both controlled a vast underground movement intended to disrupt Western civilisation. The stories about the Chinese War Lord were usually very topical. In other words, when China was in

the newspapers, Wu Ling was in the U.J. His movements were, as a rule, carried out behind a curtain of war, and he did in fact make profit out of chaos.

Looking at some other Teed characters we find that though they were every bit as popular as Wu Ling in their way, they did not have anything near as long a career. Most old readers of U.J. stories will remember the Yvonne, Nirvana and Black Eagle series. These three very well known characters disappeared from the paper after a year or two. Taking Yvonne first, the stories about this young lady were unique in every way. G.H. Teed never created a finer feminine character than the plucky girl who waged a lone battle against the group of unscrupulous business sharks who had swindled her parents, or produced a more original series of stories.

About 1932 Teed made an attempt to repeat the success of this early series by introducing a similar female character to U.J. readers. But apart from the fact that Mademoiselle Roxane (as the new character was called) appeared in a S.B. film, she was just an imitation of Yvonne minus some of the qualities that made this character so popular in the old days. I could go on singing the praises of the adorable Yvonne for ever, but before I pass on to other stars of the past I would just like to mention in some detail, one particular story about her. This is U.J. No. 963 "The Affair of the Patagonian Devil" and tells how Yvonne became a detective. The story is interesting as it shows Mademoiselle Yvonne trying to copy the man from Baker Street. However, before the case was finally solved, Sexton Blake himself took over, after which you can be sure the business was cleared up in slick style.

Norvana was to Tinker what Yvonne had been to Sexton Blake in earlier days. But in this case she was also a link with the youngster's past life before he had known Sexton Blake and become famous as the great detective's assistant. The victim of a gang of criminals, it was entirely due to Tinker that the young dancer was restored to a better life.

Regarding the Black Eagle, as far as I am aware four stories in all completed the history of this splendid character in U.J., although I do know that he made several appearances in the S.B.I. The Black Eagle was an artist and might have been an honest law-abiding citizen if the circumstances of his life had been different. But unfortunately his imprisonment on Devil's Island for a crime of which he was entirely innocent did much to embitter and turn him into an outlaw of Society. Though

he may have been a little different to other criminal characters created by G.H. Teed, I still consider him worthy of a place amongst the famous ones of that period.

And they WERE famous, those great characters of the past, famous at least to the ardent reader who followed their exploits week after week. Their like has never been seen since, for such excellence was typical only of those far off days when Sexton Blake's Own Paper rarely, if ever, gave its readers a bad story.

There are many old characters of the past, and many old Teed characters, a few of which I have mentioned in this brief article. If, however, I have not said as much as I might have about these favourites, I think I have, at least, given some idea how much I loved them.

EDITOR'S NOTE You are not alone in this devotion to old Teed characters, Wilf. They still live in the memories of many and will do so for many years to come.

Next month BLAKIANA will present:-

Reprints in the Second Series. ... by William Colcombe.
 The Story of Dr. Satira Part 7 ... by H. Maurice Bond.
 News of the Sexton Blake Club ... by H. Maurice Bond.

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