

Oct.
1948.

The
Collectors
Digest

An illustration
from a book published
this month
by Chas.
Skilton ^{Ed.}
'Billy Bunter's Bank
Note.'

No. 22
(Vol. 2)



Attention Magnet and Gem Collectors!!

The following letter appeared in the Leeds "Yorkshire Evening Post" on 4th October. I have promised Mr. Simpson that C.D. readers will do all they can to help his invalid friend who longs to find solace in the papers he loved. I am confident they won't let me down. H.L.

MAGAZINES WANTED

There is a young man in my neighbourhood who is lying in bed ill, with no prospect of recovery, and he has a great desire to read again some of the boys' magazines which gave him much pleasure in younger days. In particular he mentioned The Gem and The Magnet. He wonders if any of your readers have old copies of these magazines and could spare them to while away the irksome hours of his illness.—E. Simpson, 28, Waterton Street, Grove Road, Hunslet, Leeds 14. Magazines should be sent direct to Mr. Simpson and NOT to the Evening Post.



(Vol.2) No.22.

Price 1s.1d

Post Free

OCTOBER 1948

Editor, Miscellaneous Section
Herbert Leckenby, Telephone Exchange,
C/o Central Registry, Northern Command, York

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR:

Grand Tour Quite a lot has happened to me since I wrote my last chat. I have returned from my wonderful week in London invigorated, and feeling the world is a good place to live in. If I can only write as I feel the C.D. will be better than ever before. I have a good deal to say about my trip on other pages, but I must add this here - if the provincial members of the clan could see the enthusiasm and comradeship among their London colleagues, they would be astonished and as full of admiration as I was.

Owing to the fact that those outside London are so widely scattered it is more difficult to get together, but, as they will see, a baker's dozen of Londoners made the journey to Brighton, and that's a tidy distance, so what about it, provincials?

As for the Londoners themselves, there are some who have not yet joined the Club - mainly those interested in elder papers.

They may feel they are rather out of it, but I can assure them they would thoroughly enjoy themselves. Even if they are not particularly interested in the Magnet, and similar papers, they would meet others with similar tastes to their own, so why not get in touch with Secretary Eileen?

And here's another idea. Speaking to Harry Dowler on the 'phone on my return about the great goings on, he exclaimed "Why not an Annual Meeting in London open to all?" Well, why not? What do you think? There's no telling where we shall get to before we've finished. And to think not so long ago we were ploughing lonely furrows!

There's quite a lot about the London activities in this issue, but it's worth every inch of space, and we're increasing the size again to accommodate it anyway.

* * * * *

Can You Help Us? For the annual feature "A Look at the Libraries" we require the start-stop dates of the Football and Sports Library, the Champion Library, the Thriller Library and the Wonder Library, the latter an A.P. publication pre-first War, with reprints from the comics. Also the total numbers of each of the above. We shall be grateful for any information.

* * * * *

The Annual is Growing I have not much space to deal with the Annual this month, but I can say it's progressing nicely. Orders are coming in well, and during the first week of my holiday - at Northampton - I managed to complete the feature "A Look at the Libraries." "The Authors' Who's Who" is also finished and I think everyone will find it useful. But there's a headache coming - how to get in all the excellent articles received and promised. However, we'll get over it somehow. Just a reminder - have you sent your Questionnaire in yet?

* * * * *

A Plea When I got back from my holiday I found a huge pile of letters awaiting me. It was a treat to read them. But the great majority require an answer. I am trying to reply in between preparing this issue. I am sure if anyone has not received an answer by the time he, or she, gets the C.D. they will forgive
Yours sincerely,
Herbert Lackenby.

Last Minute Flash We hear that Mr. Kenneth Brookes, well-known A.P. artist, has consented to attend the October meeting of the London Old Boys Book Club, and that Mr. Eric R. Parker, famous illustrator of Sexton Blake stories, may be there also. How's that for enterprise?

+ + + + +

Billy Bunter in the House of Commons! In a very interesting write-up on Frank Richards which appears in the "National Newswagent" September 17th, 1948, it is revealed that a copy of the first Bunter Book was ordered for the House of Commons Library. Oh, if only we could secure a picture for the cover of the C.D. showing Sir Stafford Cripps reading it - a broad grin on his face! How about it "Robby", and you other enterprising photographers of our clan?

+ + + + +

A Gem of a Story Chatting to Clive Simpson, I heard of a delightful little incident. Here it is: Mrs. Simpson and Clive had paid a social call the previous Sunday afternoon. Over tea their hostess mentioned she had kept up a pen friendship with a lady in Australia for 29 years. When she added "Yes, I got to know her through the correspondence columns of a paper called the "Gem" in 1919", Clive, needless to say, pricked up his ears, and a very interesting chat followed.

When Clive told me this I instantly said "That must go in the C.D., for it's a "gem" of a story. I'm sure all readers will agree.

I may add that later the lady was surprised and delighted when Clive took her along a parcel of blue covered Gems to read.

+ + + + +

Owing to the large number of entries, result of Competition No. 3 has had to be held over until November issue.

+ + + + +

FOR SALE: Chums 1925; six volumes B.O.P.; Fun Almanack; Judy.

WANTED: Comic papers, Bullseyes, Startlers. L.M. Allen,
3 Montgomery Drive, Sheffield 7.

NOTE - Once again we have the good fortune to be able to present a contribution from the inimitable pen of R. A. H. Goodyear. Ed.

JUICY NAMES FOR MEATY TALES

By R. A. H. Goodyear.

When my Uncle Elijah left, after having had tea with us, I always knew there'd be a threepenny-bit under my plate. "See that he buys a book with it," he whispered to my father - and the book I invariably bought was a Weekly Budget novel.

I didn't know it then, of course, but I was "investing in futures," as they say on the markets. Practically each one of those Weekly Budget tales showed me a return of 100% and a bonus.

Take, for example, "Oriana, or, The Castle of Gold." Oriana was a peerlessly beautiful girl with a swordlike, keen-edged temper, whose many lovers thought her even more precious than the shining gold of which her father's castle was built. Most of them died fighting for her. Only the bravest and handsomest of the Montezuma warriors mastered and won her in the end.

Where I profited from "Oriana" was in the use I repeatedly made of her lovely name. One in eight of the novelettes I wrote in my 'teens had an Oriana in it. The very thought of her glamorous name inspired me to romantic situations and passionate love passages. Of course I was careful not to send her more than twice in one year to Brett's or Harmsworth's, to whose "My Pocket Novels" and "Forget-me-not" I regularly contributed under a woman's name.

Two other titles which stimulated me were "Laurie the Liftboy" and "Island of Eternal Ice". Some of the most terrific he-men and the most captivating pin-up girls of that period seemed to use the lift which Laurie worked, and Laurie appeared to be helping half of them in velusble fashion while cleverly thwarting the other half in their projected shootings, stabbings and kidnappings.

I tried to improve on Laurie's breath-catching adventures by including some of them in my own stories for boys. No one

could possibly have guessed what good use I was making of him even if they had read "Laurie the Liftboy" at the same time as I did.

"Island of Eternal Ice" was a heartrending story of incredible hardships endured by a dauntless company of Arctic explorers, who apparently lived on air for months after they had killed and eaten all their dogs. I founded half-a-dozen short stories and articles on that particular Weekly Budget novel, so that I made fifteen guineas clear on an expenditure of 3s, so to speak.

With just one other Budget novel I was less successful. I was tempted by its title, "Tattered Tom", to introduce a "Tattered Matty" into a book I wrote for boys. That was the only book I failed to sell. My usual publishers politely declined it and I became convinced that their reluctance to publish it was due to "Tattered Matty", who was a racy and outspoken tomboy and not the sort of character generally associated with "Reward" books, so often presented as Sunday School prizes.

Only twice before had I risked putting a girl into a boy's book and the third venture ruined the manuscript's chances. "Tattered Matty" let me down. Now had I called her Oriana, how different things might have been!

Though so many of the Budget threepennies featured the impossibly dashing feats of Buffalo Bill against the unfortunate Red Indians - as a boy I waved those aside impatiently, not deeming them believable, though I knew Colonel Will Cody to be a brave man in real life - many of the other books, bought with my Uncle Elijah's gift coins, gave me good entertainment and profitable ideas.

There will be amongst the readers of this magazine at least a few last-century veterans who will recall with a reminiscent thrill some of the Weekly Budget novel names, with their rich promise of interest and excitement. I ask you to roll the following titles round your tongue - I think you will find them as appetizing as I did: Lost on Mount Magnificent; Reckless Ralph the Ringleader; Merooned Crew of the "Gallant"; Cessandre the Balloonist; Rienzi, the Romantic Roman; Five Years on Blue Water; Fearless Frank's Adventures; The Pirates

of Aloration Bay; The Young Fire-Fighters; Bold Ben the Bohemian; Green Rangers of the Forest; Jockey Jim, the Epsom Midget; Tragedy of the Hermit's Cave; Rosina, Queen of Amber Isle; Murder on the Lightning Express; Glen of the Wolf Men; Tragedy of the Hermit's Cave; Maximilian the Magician.

R. A. H. GOODYEAR.

I cannot quite guarantee that the above list consists entirely of Weekly Budget titles, because very occasionally I bought an American "threepenny" and two or three pleasing Yankee titles may have slipped in. Alas, that I did not retain the books!

To vegetarian readers I apologise for my own title. "Juicy Names for Meaty Tales". I never touch meat myself, though not a vegetarian in the strictest sense because I have to rely nowadays solely on milk to keep me alive.

TEN SHILLINGS EACH offered for Magnets 998, 1118 and 1120 in perfect or very good condition to replace soiled copies and to complete copies for binding. Airmail correspondence regarding other copies available within 1921-1929 range much appreciated. Refund of postage guaranteed. R. H. HUNTER, C/o Royal Mail Agencies (Brazil) Ltd., Avenida Rio Branco 51/55, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

WANTED: Odd boys' books. Anything. What offers! Exchanges Detective Weekly 1-90. Henry J. H. Bartlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

WANTED Magnets No's 1393, 1395, 1399, 1400, 1427, 1429, 1433. John Robyns, 41 Friar Road, Brighton 6.

FOR SALE: 151 Gems, 1916-1920, Good Condition, S.O.L. No.387, "The Lost World"; 393, "Ghost of Somerton Abbey"; 33 Detective Weeklys 1935-7, 20 S.B. Libs. 2nd Series; 40 S.B. Libs. 3rd Series; 17 Magnets, 1938-40. Offers invited, S.A.E. please. W. H. Neate, Wenlock, Burnham, Bucks.

FOR SALE $\frac{1}{2}$ Vol. No. 8 (26 numbers) Boys' Friend. £1. T. W. Puckrin, 16 Willows Road, Middlesbrough.

YOUR EDITOR IN LONDONBrief Story of a Hundred ThrillsA Memorable Sunday Evening.

A few hours ago I departed from Euston after the most thrilling, astonishing, happiest week of my whole life. Now, back in Northampton with my own folk for a few hours before I travel back to the daily grind; the hour two in the morning, with just the ticking of the clock for company, I shall attempt to tell just a little of what has happened to me since I left home. To tell it all one could occupy more than the whole of an issue of the Collector's Digest, and more than once I have thought I should wake up and find it all a dream.

On Friday September 9th, then, after a restful happy week in Northampton, I took train to Euston. There I found Mrs. Eileen Whiter, energetic secretary of the London Old Boys Book Club, awaiting me. In a couple of minutes seated in the underground we were chatting away as though we had known each other for years - and I have the reputation of being a bashful, awkward sort of fellow in the presence of a member of the fair sex; especially a pretty one. But here I was quite at ease. Oh! the magic of the hobby!

As the train rumbled on I was told much to my surprise that many members of the clan were coming to Surbiton on Sunday, all because I had come to town. Verily that's something I've never experienced before.

Soon I was gripping Bob Whiter by the hand, Bob who has done so much to brighten the covers of the S.P.C., and C.D. A meal at a little cafe I got to know well in the following days, then a bus to Fleet Street to meet Eric Fayne. Prompt to time we greeted each other, then further into the City to make the acquaintance of Jimmy Hunter. Five minutes more and we were all chatting cordially over a cup of tea.

Then Eric and I journeyed out to Surbiton and the Modern School, where I was introduced to the members of the Staff. We disturbed a lady reading in her room, and lo! she was engrossed in a yarn of Sexton Blake. I learned she was a loyal fan, and was shown quite an impressive collection of

S.B.L.s. Said I - "Here's something to gladden the heart of colleague Maurice, another member for his club."

The rest of the evening was spent in inspecting the famous Fayne collection.

Saturday Sept. 11th. More browsing over Magnets, and a host of 'phone calls. Arranged to go over to Jimmy Hunter's. Was met at Waterloo by Jimmy and Mrs. Hunter, and was escorted to Mottingham where soon I was inspecting his grand collection of Lloyds, and other entrancing "bloods". After a splendid tea talked hobby, then Tom Satchell came along, and soon we were recalling the exciting days of the Pearson swindles. Back to Surbiton at 11 p.m., after an all too few delightful hours.

Sunday Sept. 12th. An enjoyable run to Hampton Court with Eric. More collection browsing after lunch, then in ones and twos the members of the clan arrived. Eileen will tell you elsewhere all who came that day. What a thrill for me. Came tea - (who would have believed that rations are still the order of the day?) then the meeting. Kindly, generous things were said about the C.D., and my heart was full. My thought travelled back to the days when Maurice and I first planned it. Never then did I dream that within two years I should, up in London Town, hear a gathering of many collectors give our little mag the credit for bringing them together. All I could say was that the C.D. may have originated the idea, but it would have come to naught if many of the members themselves had not put in a lot of hard work.

Then I was called upon to make a speech. Having never made a speech in my life I might have been excused if I had got the wind-up, yet so much did I feel at home in that friendly gathering of jolly good fellows that what I managed to say did not seem to go down too badly. Gee! did all this really happen to me that Sunday evening?

Then goodbye to the Modern School, and Eric, Madam, Miss Smallpage, Mrs. Holleck. Vincent; for the time being at least, and a race to catch the last train to Wood Green; Eileen and Bob, neck and neck, myself a bad third. Supper and then to bed past the midnight hour. The end of a perfect day.

Monday Sept. 13th. In the morning, thanks to Eileen, a very pleasant and interesting chat with Mr. Walter Bell, an artist connected with the A.P. for many years. In the afternoon a stroll round Foyles and the West-End with Bob. Later at Lordship Lane, dear old Alfred Horsey looked in, giving me a delightful surprise. Then Mr. & Mrs. Frank Keeling came along adding two more to those I was meeting for the first time. A quiet and pleasant evening followed, chatting about the usual topic.

Tuesday Sept. 14th Another eventful day. In the morning a visit to Bill Martin. Mountains of Magnets, piles of Gems, Nelson Lees, and the rest. He must have raked the ends of the earth for them. Then a 'phone call to Frank Pettingell saying I was on my way. A complicated, and somewhat lengthy journey followed, and I eventually arrived at Highfield Lodge, hot and somewhat dishevelled. But rather than miss what followed I would gladly have walked a hundred miles in my bare feet. For I received a welcome fit for a king, then a magic hour or two in an astonishing library in which I would have loved to have spent a month. I was left to browse to my heart's content among the books I loved so well in the days of long ago - The Boys' Friend, Ailene Turpins, and Claude Duvals; Boys' Champion Story Paper, and many more. I was enchanted.

A repeat and then to the Baltons Theatre in Kensington where Frank (it had to be christian names by then) is playing in "Oscar Wilde". Half an hour in his dressing-room where I was initiated into the mysteries of make-up. Bill Martin arrived; we took our seats in the little theatre, then for over two hours sat spell-bound by a brilliant portrayal of that tragic character of late Victorian days, a performance which will live in my memory for many a day. Of a truth, there are talented ones in our little circle.

Another visit to the dressing room, and en route to Bill Martin, then back to my home in Lordship Lane.

Wednesday Sept. 15th. Another visit to the City, where I met still another of my pen friends for the first time, Eric Landy. We were joined by Jimmy Hunter to whom I introduced Eric, unknown, in appearance, to myself five minutes before, and in less than no time once again three fellows were chatting together

over lunch as though they had known each other for years. Is there anything, anywhere, which creates comradeship so rapidly as this fascinating hobby of ours?

Back to now familiar Lordship Lane, and another lunch (hope the Minister of Food doesn't see this), then out to Greenwich to spend a night with Charlie Wright. Twenty seconds in the house, and I was at home. I said at the Sunday meeting that one often heard the Southerners were unfriendly, and difficult to get on with. I expressed the opinion that from my experience, it was a fallacy if ever there was one. I meant it then; I mean it more than ever now. Charlie and Mrs. Wright made me feel it was good to be alive. Lucky Charlie! having a wife who understands a Nostalgian!

Charlie and I talked the hobby until the wee' sma' hours, retiring to bed at 3 a.m.

Thursday Sept. 16th. Returned to Lordship Lane for the last time. A number of 'phone calls with apologies to those I had been unable to call upon. A quiet afternoon, and then to Euston at 6 o'clock, accompanied by Bob and Eileen. The train steamed out and the happiest, most exhilarating week of my life had drawn to a close.

Back to Northampton, I learned I could have left Euston at seven and reached Northampton as soon. I swore below my breath for I could have had one more hour in London.

And there's a brief, inadequate summary of those crowded hours. Soon I shall be back in the room in which I write most of my hobby letters. It will never be the same as when I left it. Then the majority of those I had been writing to were but shadowy figures, now I've met them, and in future as I write the room will be one of memories, and a brighter place to me.

I have only one regret; circumstances prevented me seeing some of those I hoped to see when I set out. Where they are concerned I sincerely hope it is only a pleasure briefly postponed.

Maybe I'm a sentimental sort of bloke, but be that as it may, I am not ashamed to confess that oft times during the week there has been a lump in my throat, and I shall remember all that happened to me till the very day I die.



Frank Richards' Monthly Message

September 1st, 1948.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for your letter and the September C.D. The cover picture seems to me to have come out very well indeed. R.A.H.Goodyear's article had only one fault — it should have been longer. I like his reminiscences of the old compositor, I note my own name among the authors who gave him little trouble with their MSS. But he never knew what he had escaped — for my typescript often resembles a jig-saw puzzle with interlining and marginal corrections, in its natural state — but I always made it a rule to re-type any page that was likely to give the printer undue trouble: so it often happened that the most thoroughly "edited" page looks, when the printer receives it, the cleanest and neatest, as if it had never been re-touched at all. Probably the compositor never guessed that one!

It is very kind of you to say that you are interested in the hymn, which I hope may materialise next year. The title is the first line: "Help me, O Lord, to keep Thy holy way!" Several people have liked it: though of course no one should hope to produce anything so good as "Abide with Me", or "Nearer, my God, to Thee". We humbler folk must be content to follow the masters at a respectful distance.

I thought the August number the best thus far: but the September issue certainly equals it. I begin to look for the C.D. as I used to look for the "Boys of England" in 1880.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS

From My Own City

Nostaw,
Stockton Lane,
York.

8th September, 1948

Dear Sir,

After seeing a copy of your "Collector's Digest" in the window of Mr. Wood's shop in Stonegate, I was bold enough to go inside and ask him for further information. He very kindly gave me a copy, saying he did not think you would mind, and I must say I found it one of the most interesting periodicals I have read for a long time.

I should like to hear more of it, and would welcome a chance of a long chat with you on this fascinating subject. I wonder, therefore, if you would care to come up and see me some Sunday afternoon for tea. I could show you a few Nelson Lees, Boys Friends, Gems and Monster Libraries of my own if you are interested.

Yours faithfully,

J. P. WOOD.

(Note - I promptly accepted Mr. Wood's kind invitation and found he had quite a handsome collection of E.S. Brooks lore, and he's been interested for 20 years, yet we knew not each other. But the C.D.'s altered all that. - Ed.)

+ + +

Tribute from Vancouver

3930 W. 35th Aven.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
September 17, 1948.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

Enclosed find a money order for 7s.9d., prepayment for my copy of the Collectors' Digest Annual.

I can't let the occasion pass without saying how much

pleasure I derived from reading your "Streets of Memories" article in the August issue of the C.D. You'll be interested to know that I have in my library a copy of the very Welkey book you mentioned, "Kidnapped by Pirates". It is illustrated by Paul Hardy, too.

Regards,

Cordially yours,

PEARO SUTHERLAND.

+ + +

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

The Brighton Meeting

Sunday September 5th was a red letter day for the Club, as it was the date of our first meeting for two months. Owing to holidays, August was deleted from our programme. Our latest and best fixture took place at the home of Mr. John Robyns, 41 Friar Road, Brighton 6, and a party of thirteen wended its way from the metropolis, to arrive in Brighton at 11 a.m.

Once there, we had lunch, and a short wander round, then we boarded the trolley bus which took us to Friar Road. We arrived at 3.30, and at 4 o'clock Mr. Robyns opened the meeting by reading a letter of good wishes from Frank Richards. Letters were also read from those unable to attend, and other letters were read out and discussed.

It was decided to elect a committee consisting of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. This was soon done. The committee is as follows:- Chairman: Mr. L. Packman, Secretary: Mrs. E. Whiter, Treasurer: Mr. R. Whiter.

The next item on the agenda was that of fixing a monthly subscription rate, and after some discussion it was decided that members should pay 1/- per month, except for September, when the rate would be 2/-, to cover some advertising and initial expenses. All members not present were to be notified, which has since been done, and as Honorary members

accrued, each would be sent bulletins from time to time, giving full information of Club activities, and also informing them of books for sale. We also decided to make out a detailed catalogue of prices, covering all the books throughout the years. This will be done over a number of meetings. It was suggested that the secretary should write to Mr. Noel Coward, Mr. Charles Hawtry, and Mr. Ian McKay, asking them if they would honour the Club with their patronage. This will be dealt with in the near future. The name of the Club came up next, and it was unanimously agreed that the present name should be retained. The Secretary then made an important announcement, namely, that the Editor of the C.D., Mr. Herbert Leckenby, would be visiting London the following week, and that a special meeting had been called at Eric Fayno's school, the Modern School, Surbiton, for the purpose of as many members of the Club as could possibly come, of meeting our friend Herbert. We then adjourned for refreshments.

Regarding the refreshments, we were all very astounded and not a little touched to find in the diningroom a table laden with a galaxy of cakes and sandwiches, and reposing in the middle a beautiful big cake covered with pink icing, and a lovely red rose and the words: "To the Collectors' Meeting" inscribed in red icing on the top. All around were cut out figures of the characters of the books, and on top of the cake was Bob Cherry. Mr. Chairman cut the cake, while Messrs. Hall and Haswell took photos, and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. All praise goes to Mrs. J. Robyns for that lovely surprise.

After tea, we returned to the meeting room, and there was a short bout of "Exchange and Mart". As time was getting on everyone settled down to the quiz which was won by Mr. M. Hall, with Mr. M. Haswell second, and Mr. L. Packman third. This was followed by a new idea, a Pictorial Quiz. On pieces of card, objects and pictures were stuck or tied to denote a character, i.e., there was a picture of a Jester denoting Monty Lowther; this proved very popular, and was won by Mrs. J. Packman, with Mr. L. Packman and Mr. John Seal joint second. Third was Mr. R. Blythe.

The meeting closed at 7.30 p.m., as some had to catch an early train, but they missed the "piece de resistance", which

we enjoyed as we whiled away the time, before we also caught our train. This was a showing of one of the episodes of "The Exploits of Elaine", with Pearl White, on Mr. Robyn's own projector, and it gave us great entertainment for half an hour.

We left our kind hosts at approximately 8.30 p.m., and returned to London, having enjoyed a really wonderful day.

Those in attendance at the meeting were: Mr., Mrs., and Miss Peckman, Mr. and Mrs. Keeling, Mr. and Mrs. R. Whiter, Messrs. B. Whiter, R. Blythe, J. Geal, Maud R. Haswell, M. Hall, and last but not least, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Robyns. Both the Pictorial Quiz and the Big Quiz were compiled by the brothers B. and R. Whiter.

EILEEN WHITER,
Hon. Secretary.

+ + +

THE OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

Special Meeting

On Sunday September 12th, a special meeting was called at Mr. Eric Payne's home, The Modern School, Surbiton, and we were very happy indeed to have with us our Editor, Mr. Herbert Leckenby. The weather was most inclement, but in spite of this, almost all the members turned up, and Mr. Chairman opened the meeting at 6 p.m.

The secretary read the minutes of the Brighton meeting, and they were passed and duly signed; then several questions were brought up. One of these, about price control, was asked by Mr. Payne, and quite a discussion ensued, but the matter was soon settled. Mr. Herbert Leckenby then raised our old bugbear, the subject of specialised numbers. It was agreed that only oddments should be classed in this category, and the next question being on the cataloguing of the books, we decided to deal with one per meeting, and started with the Magnet forthwith. The method we adopted was that of splitting them up, according to the colours on the cover. A point was raised by Mr. R. Blythe about a difference in price of those not written by Mr. Richards, but we decided to keep strictly

to the year, and not worry about that. Our price list is as follows: Red Magnets, 1908-1915, according to condition; 2/6, 2/- and 1/6. 1916-1917, 1/9 to 1/6; 1918-1922, 1/6 to 1/3; 1923-1930, 1/3 to 1/-; 1931-1937, 1/- to 9d.; 1938 to the end, 6d.

This was agreed unanimously as well covering the whole of the run of the Magnet.

We then gave an official welcome to Mr. Herbert Leckenby, and he spoke of the beginning of the Club, and of how it had "grown up and prospered". He mentioned the almost complete collection of Magnets which Mr. Martin has obtained, giving us the story of how they came to light. It was suggested that the Club should buy the collection outright, but this was found to be impracticable. Mr. Leckenby also spoke about his association with the books, and the events which led up to the publishing of the first C.D., and the reactions to it by readers. He gave his present publication number as 130, though originally it was 75. (October 140, ed.)

In reply to questions Mr. Leckenby admitted that when cost of postages, stationery, etc. was taken into account, there was some loss on the magazine. The meeting was strongly of the opinion that this should not be allowed to continue, and that the price should be increased to 1/6, as the C.D. was well worth it.

Mr. Leckenby replied that whilst he greatly appreciated the compliment and kindly consideration, he thought perhaps it would not be wise to increase the price at the present time, and he was hopeful that the increasing circulation would eventually wipe out the loss. All present then declared that so far as they were concerned they would as a voluntary gesture pay 1/6 in future and they hoped others would follow suit.

Mr. Chairman replied to Mr. Leckenby saying how much we appreciate our little monthly "Digest", and all the work which is put into the compiling of this interesting and indispensable feature.

Our treasurer then gave his financial report and collected

what subs that were outstanding, and this was followed by one or two more suggestions. One of these came from Mr. Payne, and was that people like Mr. Chapman and Mr. Shields should be asked to become patrons. The badge was discussed, and a design which had been effected by Mr. R. Whiter was shown round. It was left to him, as treasurer, to write to contacts which he has of this nature and find out an estimate.

The next meeting was fixed for Sunday October 3rd at 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, S.E. 22, the home of Mr. L. Packman, our Chairman. Mr. Packman said that he had the use of a hall nearby which would serve our purpose very well and suggested that the meeting should begin at 6 p.m., though members should arrive about 5.30 p.m. or a little before, while for long distance people, his house would be open from 2 p.m.

Mr. C. Wright said that he would like to offer his home to go on the rota in the New Year, a suggestion which we welcomed heartily.

Mr. Fayne apologised about the dinner, saying that it was impossible at this time owing to the presence of the "British Workmen", but that he would like very much to have a really grand Christmas Party instead. Everyone was highly pleased with this suggestion, and it was left to Mr. Fayne to make the necessary arrangements, and then get in touch with the secretary.

The meeting closed at 8 p.m., and the evening was rounded off with refreshments and "swops" among the members, with a bit of "Mart" as well.

Those in attendance were Madam, Miss Smellpage and Mrs. Hollock, Mr. and Mrs. R. Whiter, and Mrsrs. L. Packman, J. Geal, B. Whiter, J. Robyns, E. Payne, R and M. Haswell, M. Hall, C. Wright, H. Leckenby, V. Page, R. Blythe and C.J. Perrot.

EILEEN WHITER, (Hon. Secretary)

NOTE: With reference to the question of price raised at the meeting, I hardly knew what to say in reply, for how can one adequately express one's appreciation to fellows who act like that? I thought, though, that as money is not so plentiful as it was, there may be some who felt they could not pay more. Therefore, officially, the price is still 1/1 and no one will be thought any less about if they continue to pay that amount. - Ed.)

The Nelson Lee Column

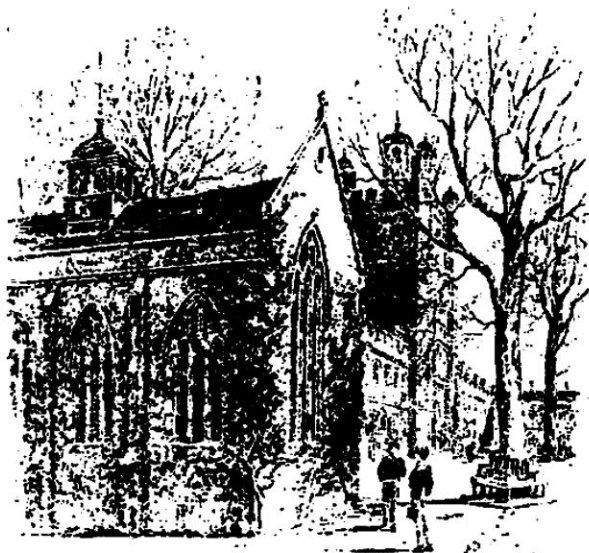
Conducted by Robert Blythe,
81 Alsen Road, Holloway, London, N.7.

In a very interesting letter Len Allan of Sheffield gives the following information:-

"The creator of Nelson Lee, Maxwell Scott, first introduced Nipper into his stories in 1903; the yarn was entitled "Nelson Lee's Pupil" and ran in the "Boys' Herald", starting in No.2. Nipper was discovered by Lee earning a precarious living selling matches in the streets of London. After many exciting adventures, Lee established the fact that Nipper was heir to an estate valued at nearly half a million, (Scott was always lavish with the sums of money involved) and that his baptismal name was Richard Hamilton. As the lad had no relatives Lee was appointed his guardian and arranged for him to attend St. Ninian's College on the South coast of Sussex. His adventures there are described in another "Herald" serial - "Nipper's Schooldays" which appeared in 1904. His chum, a dude type, was the Hon. Adolphus Blckett-Bruce, who was probably the inspiration for E.S.Brooke's character. Tregellis West. When Brookes introduced Nipper's real name he made no explanation and was apparently willing to let the old Scott yarn cover the matter. Naturally many readers made enquiries but the author skilfully sidestepped awkward questions by stating the affair had too many unpleasant memories for Nipper's peace of mind."

He also adds the following note:- "First came across the details on reading the "Boys' Herald" No. 73, dated Dec. 17th, 1904, a yarn by Maxwell Scott entitled "Nipper's Schooldays." The preceding story covering the affair appeared as a serial in preceding numbers 1902/3 - title self-explanatory - "Nelson Lee's Pupil". On checking through the "Boy's Friend" 1st series I now find that both stories appeared under their original titles, as No. 19 (N.L. Pupil) and No. 171.

Now for L.P.'s query as to the numbers of the N.L. containing stories of the "Green Triangle". (My remarks last month regarding various stories appearing in later years also apply to the "Green Triangle" O.S. 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, 41, 44, 47, 50, 53, 78, 484. L.P. has also suggested that a history of the N.L. would be welcomed by collectors. Well, it would be a long job, involving quite a lot of research and writing up.



The Chapel, St. Frank's College

(With Ancient House & Clock Tower in background.)

I am prepared to tackle it, however, only if I feel that the majority of N.L. Supporters feel that they would like to read such a history. Perhaps you would drop me a line letting me know what you think of the idea. Another thing I'd like your opinion of is the accompanying sketch of St. Franks. Our editor has agreed to print a series of them and personally, I thought it was a good idea. However, I received from a reader some friendly criticism to the effect that good as the sketch was he'd prefer to see the space taken up by words. How do you all feel about it. Majority decides!

I think that there's just space for the next 10 titles. No. 41, The Buried Invention; 42, The Great Will Forgery; 43, The Robbery of Ponders Bank; 44, The Doctor's Racehorse; 45, The Forged Marriage Lines; 46, The Last of the Genghis; 47, The Ship of Doom; 48, When Rogues Fall Out; 49, The Forged War Orders; 50, The Great Club Mystery.

(Note - We discussed the question of a history of the "Nelson Lee" at the meeting. As Bob says, it will require a lot of research, and it will not be possible to have it in time for this year's Annual. However, I urged him to go ahead and we would make it a star feature for next year's. Yes, we are already thinking of No. 3. - Ed.)

WANTED: Collectors' Digest 1 - 11 inclusive, 14, 15, and 17. 1-100 Nelson Lee's, 1st large series, and Monster Library, all numbers. John Gunn, Milton's Head Hotel, Nottingham.

WANTED: Early Issues of Gemm 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: Alpine Publications, Dick Turpins, Claude Duvals, etc. E. R. Landy, 4 Nuneston Road, Dagenham, Essex.

WANTED TO EXCHANGE: Blue-covered Gems in good condition for Red-covered Magnets. T. G. Satchell, 84 Ankerdine Crescent, Shooter's Hill, London S.E. 18.

HAVE YOU SENT IN YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE YET?

WE SHOULDN'T LIKE TO MISS YOU FROM THE WHO'S WHO.

THE REMARKABLE STORY OF A
MAGNET COLLECTION

By the Editor

In our last issue there appeared a last minute per stating a nearly complete collection of Magnets might become available to our circle. We could not say more, for it was then only a possibility. Now I am pleased to say it is a fact, thanks to the enterprising Bill Martin with his persistent advertising.

Now there's a very interesting story behind this deal, and this is the way of it. The collection belonged to an old seaman now dead who had been an enthusiastic admirer of the Magnet ever since it's start, and who had, despite his voyages over the Seven Seas, succeeded in building up an almost complete collection, many of the copies being picked up in all sorts of corners of the world.

Some time ago his executors saw one of Bill's adverts, got in touch with him, and after some negotiations terms were agreed upon. I can vouch for the fact that the executors were quite aware that Magnets were valuable papers to have in one's possession these days, and the cheque they handled was a substantial one.

And there was something else about the transaction which interested me vastly. Bill Martin has on more than one occasion advertised in papers with huge sales, like the London Star, and got not a single reply of any consequence, yet this deal came off as a result of an advert. in an obscure county paper with an insignificant circulation. Well, didn't I say some time ago that advertising for old boys' papers was a sheer gamble, best left to those willing to have a go and prepared to drop a packet.

Anyway, one of the highlights of my London trip was a morning at Bill Martin's with those stacks of Magnets before me. Some 1500 of them including a good proportion of the coveted red covers! Actually, the collection would have been a complete one had it not happened that some of the earliest numbers had been stored in a different place and unfortunately suffered

from the ravages of time. However, those in Bill's possession are in quite good condition.

Well, that's how the treasure trove sailed into our pool, and you who are lucky enough to get a share, just give a thought to an old sailor who loved the Magnet and sought for them in all sorts of places when he sailed the seas.

—oO—

PREFECTS OF GREYFRIARS

by T. W. Puckrin

The big public schools of bygone days have been renowned, and justly so, for their school boy heroes. Thomas Hughes, the author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays", set a fashion in schoolboy heroes, which has persisted to the present day. Talbot Baines Reed followed on and popularised a theme which seemingly will never grow old. And finally, Frank Richards, happily still with us, has created a schoolboy fraternity which will last as long as schoolboys themselves. Speaking of schoolboys, one naturally thinks of the masters who teach them. But there is another class of schoolboy which hardly gets the credit it deserves. I refer to the prefects, the noncommissioned officers of the great public schools. In his immortal classic, Thomas Hughes makes Dr. Arnold lay special stress upon the influence exerted by the seniors of the school. This influence could be, and often was, brought to bear on the wrong side. Prefects who encouraged bullying and gambling were the causes of a good deal of corruption. It was Dr. Arnold who saw this so clearly that he would have no boy in his school who told a lie. Prefects were the natural link between masters and boys, and good prefects made for good boys. In the Greyfriars Stories, the prefects played a prominent part. It is the intention of the author of this article to deal with those prefects who were outstanding in this respect. Wingate, Captain of the School and Head prefect naturally comes to one's mind. It was Wingate who received Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad, on his first appearance at Greyfriars. Old readers of the "Magnet" will remember Wingate Minor, the younger brother of the

popular prefect. Wingate Minor turned out to be the very opposite to his elder brother, pub haunting and card playing being one of his many accomplishments. The "Famous Five" were pressed into service to reclaim the wayward youth from the primrose path of dalliance. They made an interesting series of stories, though the theme wore a little thin with constant repetition. A mighty man with the willow, Wingate figures in the usual sporting rivalry with "Rookwood"; St. Tom's and other public schools that appeared from time to time.

Speaking of Wingate brings one by easy stages to Gerald Loder, "the Sixth Form bad hat". The number of times "the Sportsman of the Sixth" has just missed the "chopper" must equal those of Vernon Smith, the "Bounder of Greyfriars". The number of "fivers" Loder has risked on "Bonny Boy" for the "Swindlem Handicap" would almost be sufficient to pay off the National Debt. But Loder never learned by experience, and must have been a horn of plenty to Messrs. Cobb and Banks of the "Green Man". Loder came into conflict with Wingate almost as often as he did with Harry Wharton and Co. His chief ambition was to become captain of Greyfriars, and in time he succeeded. But Loder's Gestapo methods went down badly with the cheerful Removites, and his attempts to humiliate his fallen rival soon brought about his own downfall. In the numerous rebellions which were a stock feature of the "Magnet", Loder was always to be found on the side of the tyrannical Form master whose business was to bring the Remove to heel. This was another theme which never failed Frank Richards and it was this class of story in which he appeared at his best. I am bound to confess I always liked them and the ingenious way in which Frank Richards rang the different changes on a well worn theme. Like Billy Bunter, Loder was a thoroughly detestable character, and like Bunter, Greyfriars would not have been the same without him. Loder always managed to evade the "sack", his luck was proverbial. Arthur Carne, his study mate, was a lesser edition of Loder and played "Cassio" to "Iago".^{*} Carne lacked Loder's ambition and strength of mind. It was his fate always to play the lesser scoundrel. Of Stephen Gwynne little can be said except that he was Wingate's study mate. One has to go back a number of years to find an instance of a Sixth Form prefect getting the sack. Carberry was the culprit, but I cannot remember the circumstances under which it took place.

* See "Othello, the Moor of Venice".

Going further back still, very old readers will remember "Ionides" the Greek Sixth Former. "Ionides", a dandy in dress, was much addicted to scents and pomades. I have already made reference to his clash with the "Famous Five" in a former article. So there is no need to labour this point over again. Ionides soon vanished from the precincts of Greyfriars, and there were none to lament his passing. The Sixth Form prefects with their "ash-plants" and their Greek plays have played their parts on the Greyfriars stage. And no mean part either. It was Euclid the mathematician who said that the "whole was greater than the part". The prefects of "Greyfriars" have played no mean part in the "Greyfriars" anthology. In view of Frank Richards' latest venture into the fields of literature, it is a part that will be looked forward to with interest by the writer of the present article.

—c0c—

FOR SALE: N.L.L. 542-549 (complete Ezra Quirke set) £1;
 N.L.L. 137 - 139 (1928) "Return of Ezra Quirke" (complete set)
 5/-; N.L.L. 72 - 75 (1927) Alan Castleton series (complete set)
 6/-; N.L.L. 118, 120, 122, 123, 132, 135 (all splendid
 condition) 10/6d; GEMS, 1022, 1023, 1024, 3/-; Holiday Annuals
 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, £4. OR THE LOT £6. L. Vosper,
 13 Kinlet Road, S.E.18.

THE ANNUAL. Just received by Air Mail from Canada -
 "Greyfriars Removites. How They Arrived at the School", by
 W. H. Gender. Great stuff.

Autumn's In! But is Your Questionnaire?

Advertise in the "Annual". 2d. word.

Do You Want the Bunter Books?

We Have Some Order Forms.

Have You Ordered Your Annual Yet?

You'll be Sorry if You Miss it.



THE ROUND TABLE

Many thanks to those who wrote last month saying how they enjoyed the extra long feature "I Visit Baker Street Again". It is good to know that this kind of item is appreciated and I think that it makes a welcome change from the more informative kind of article. This month I am including two articles by members of our Blake circle who have proved themselves ardent fans during the last couple of years and I think you will agree with me that they have once again given us "the goods". The article by Rex Dolphin, "Sexton Blake and the Supernatural" strikes an entirely new note and as he himself says, it shows us yet another angle of the complex character whom we love so well. The second item "Known In Other Fields" again shows that John Gocher spends a lot of his time on research, and although it may not be a completely "Blakian" article, it will give readers a few interesting sidelights on some of the popular authors who have contributed to the Blake field.

I must not take up a lot of space this month, for we MUST make room for the interesting story of my co-editor's recent tour, which will interest you Sexton Blake fans as much as anyone else. So I will close with the hope that you will have enjoyed this issue and that you will let me know your views on the contents of Blakiana. I want bouquets and criticisms, and I also want more and more articles. Next month I hope to continue (if not conclude) the story of Dr. Satira. H. M. BOND.

SEXTON BLAKE AND THE SUPERNATURALby Rex Dolphin

The supernatural is normally out of place in a detective story; if it exists there it has to be finally explained away in terms of logic and materialism, in other words, it must be proved to be faking.

So, most cases where Sexton Blake has been up against "supernatural" phenomena have been resolved along those lines. After all, a detective is a hard-headed practical man, not addicted to superstitious beliefs.

All the more surprising, therefore, that there should be, in Blake history, four outstanding stories of the supernatural in which the manifestations are not explained away. And Blake himself is unable to explain them except in terms of magic. In every one of these stories, moreover, Blake is credited with a knowledge and study of the occult.

First is "Union Jack" No. 1111, "The House of the Horoscope" by Gilbert Chester. This is in effect an ingeniously contrived story of hidden treasure, all the events being based on astrology. To solve the case, Sexton Blake has to cast a horoscope!

Chester himself says, in a "Detective Supplement" article in the same issue:

"It may be thought strange that in my story I have made Sexton Blake, the modern, shrewd, hard headed detective, conversant with astrology.... More remarkable that I should have made him resort to it as a means of solving the mystery.... Blake's conduct was neither so extraordinary nor so far fetched as might at first sight appear."

He goes on to say that a knowledge of astrology and other occult sciences is necessary to a detective whose job it may be to expose frauds and trickery based upon the said sciences:

"Consequently, for this reason alone, a detective would take care to acquire at least a superficial working knowledge of the art. Moreover, since

the signs and symbols in astrology, together with most of the mathematical calculations employed in creating a horoscope, are also employed in navigation, a highly educated and well informed man such as Sexton Blake would start equipped at the outset with much information relative to star-reading."

The second of these queer stories is also by Gilbert Chester. "Union Jack" No. 1400, "Fear!" (later reprinted in "Detective Weekly"). This is really a hair raising story for anyone who is even slightly credulous of the supernatural. Elemental spirits, a poltergeist, Black Magic operated by an African witch-doctor all combine to strike terror into the reader, and the characters even unto Blake himself. And the fact that part of it is explained by trickery somehow leaves a final effect more chilling than if nothing had been explained.

Another poltergeist is up to his tricks in "Union Jack" No. 1245, "The Haunted Hotel Mystery" (also later reprinted in "The Sexton Blake Library" as one story of a two-story issue). This yarn is mainly concerned with smuggling but has several genuine supernatural moments, and a most effective supernatural ending, with Blake again showing some measure of credulity. Anthony Skene wrote this one.

But the best supernatural story of all is George Hamilton Teed's "The Victim of Black Magic" in "The Sexton Blake Library" 2nd Series No. 134. This is one of my favourite stories in all Blake's. Strange, because I am absolutely unbelieving of such matters. This yarn could easily rank with the finest occult stories ever written. It is a tale of Huxton Rymer and Mary Trent, with Rymer practising the Black Art, of a dying man whose body is entered by the spirit of an evil Hindu black magician, of a gigantic white owl which carries a man's soul from India to a lonely place in the West of England. In retrospect, almost laughable in its incredibility, yet, start reading it and its spell grips you. I tell you, when I read this story twenty years ago my flesh crept. I lived in a lonely part of the country, with brooding woods and the night full of strange sounds. Soon after reading the story I saw in the woods a huge white bird of an unknown species. Today I picked the story up again. No longer does it terrify, but it certainly still fascinates.

And in this story Mr. Teed tells us definitely that Sexton Blake was a student of the occult, that he had lived in Tibet as an ascetic and had studied the most abstruse phases of black and white magic. Blake was a member of one of these Hindu cults (Yoga?), had taken part in many psychic demonstrations, and had actually witnessed a display of levitation.

And so the addition of yet another aspect of Sexton Blake's many-sided character is brought to light - an aspect that cannot be ignored as the three authors concerned are among the elite of Blake writers.

KNOWN IN OTHER FIELDS

by John W. Gocher

(Author's Note - The authors mentioned in this article are all represented in the Second Series of the Sexton Blake Library. I cannot call the list complete but here is the result of my researches.)

During the last few months I have become increasingly interested in discovering details about the authors who wrote Sexton Blake stories in the second series of the Library and I have, after considerable investigation, begun to draw up a clearer picture of these authors' other literary activities outside the realms of the Amalgamated Press. I present here some of the facts discovered,

George Hamilton Teed, who wrote the first title in this series, wrote several stories which were published by Messrs. Wright & Brown. Chief amongst his efforts - republished in the Detective Weekly - was the Shadow Crook which, of late, has been republished in the Mellifont Press Library. Another excellent book by this author was "Killer Abroad", a really exciting story.

Pierre Quiroule, brilliant creator of Granite Grant and Mme. Julie, is well known under the name of W. W. Sayer, his correct name. Only this year Wright & Brown have published his latest novel, a pleasant little work entitled "Mine Sinister Host" which is really more of a fantasy than a thriller. Two years

previously, he published "The Nemesis Club". Gwyn Evans needs no comment from me, save that he was one of the most brilliant writers of detective stories whom this country has even known.

A few days ago I chanced to see a ninepenny thriller entitled "The Ripper Returns" upon the counter of my newsagent and, glancing at it, felt a thrill of pleasure when I noticed that the author was Anthony Skene. It was a tremendous story, much better than the majority of nine and sixpenny novels which one buys to-day. Skeffington's have published several of Skene's novels, chief amongst them being "Gallows Alley", "Monsieur Zenith", "The Masks" (serialised in the Detective Weekly under the title "The Book of Doom" and "Five Dead Men").

E.S. Brooks needs no comment either, nor does A. Symonds, or Berry Lyndon, better known to us as Alfred Edgar, but to theatre-goers by his first mentioned name as the talented author of "The Amazing Doctor Clitterhouse". Richard Goyno is still writing for the Hutchinson Group, while Donald Stuart's brilliance is well known to readers of Sexton Blake stories. W.J. Elliott, famed for but one title in this series, has a long list of successes to his credit. Messrs. Gerald Swan Ltd. have published at least thirty of his novels ranging from American crime stories (usually with a strong sex interest) to historical romances, and Herbert Jenkins published several of his stories in the thirties.

Richard Essex who, to my knowledge, wrote but one Sexton Blake, "The Crook of Cranford Court (256), wrote his Lessiter stories for Jenkins, one of which has recently been republished in their new 3/6d series, and Stacey Blake was not exactly inactive in the realms of bound fiction. Rex Harlinge wrote several mysteries under the name of "Capstan" for Wright & Brown's and, also, for the Mellifont Press and Ledbrooke Black, Michael Pyle and L.C. Duthwaite cannot be called unknown.

Perhaps the most famous of Sexton Blake authors in other fields - although he has never been a favourite of mine - was John G. Brandon who has a tremendous list of successes entitled "M for Murder". I admit this mystifies me, as I was under the impression that Brandon had joined the Great Majority.

T.C. Bridges was not active in Sexton Blake circles, but he wrote dozens of novels, mystery and romance, for other markets. Maurice B. Dix, George Dilnot, C. Vernon Frost, John Creasey

and John Hunter have all written many novels for other markets, Dix for Ward, Lock Ltd, and Robert Hale Ltd., George Dilnot for Messrs. Geoffrey Elms, Cressy for John Long and John Hunter for Cassells using that name, and for Hurst & Blackett as Peter Meriton. (A new book by this author entitled "Plunder", featuring Captain Dack, will soon be published.

Gerald Bowman, ex-R.A.F. officer, editor of some magazines for the A.P.Ltd., has recently had a book published by Werner Laurie. "Pattern in Poison Ivy", a tremendous story which is fully in keeping with that excellent story of his "The Devil's Own (584)". Anthony Parsons, too, has written several titles, his latest being "Death on the Wall" for Messrs. Wright & Brown Ltd.

There must be many other authors who have written for publishers, but I have no record of their stories. It seems extremely strange to me that there is no record of any publisher putting stories by Gilbert Chester, Murray Graydon, Warwick Jordine, Allen Blair, Coutts Brisbane, and Walter Edwards on the market, but there is always the possibility that these authors and many others wrote under other names and did we but know the connection, we should be astounded.

—oOo—

NEWS:

Kenneth Brooks attended London Meeting on 3rd. Gave entertaining review of his work for the old papers.

Easter suggested for the first Annual Meeting in London.

WANTED:

Gems 1916-17. Will exchange for magnets.
L.Packman, 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, S.E.22.