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(Vol: 3) No. 32

August 1949

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AUGUST 1949

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

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Our "Annual": Orders for the C.D. Annual are coming in in very encouraging fashion. A good proportion are from "new chums" whose names will be appearing in the "Who's Who" for the first time and as a result will add to its interest. And here I should just like to explain that we did not intend the "30-word maximum" mentioned on the Questionnaire to apply to the newcomers, for we recognise that they cannot very well give details of their collections and their views on the hobby in that number of words. But as there will be more names than ever in the "Who's Who," we want everyone to be as concise as possible. One or two, whose names have appeared in the two earlier Annuals, have been just a little too "wordy". The "Who's Who" is a very popular and valuable feature, but we don't want it to occupy too much space, for we are going to have the same old headache - how to get in all we would wish.

Concerning the "Magnet" series, mentioned in the July number, I was getting down to sorting these out in my few spare

moments and was finding it a pretty formidable job. Then John Geal, stout fellow, came along and sportingly volunteered to take it off my hands. I gladly agreed. And now Bill Gander has sent me a lot of more than useful notes on the earlier series. When completed this feature will form a valuable record running to many pages. We had intended doing the same with the "Gem", but that I am afraid will have to wait until next year. St. Jim's won't be neglected though. For instance, Roger Jenkins has promised one of his character studies - subject - Cardew. Well, you know what Roger can do. And I'm going to go on whetting your appetites each month until the Annual appears. I can assure you there'll be something for everybody.

More Old Favourites Return: Do you remember you old-timers, those fine serials and complete stories concerning Teddy Lester & Co. of Slapton School, by John Finnemore, which appeared in the Boys' Realm, in the care-free days before the First World War, the dear, dead days when you could buy a real feast of reading for a humble penny? If you do re-call them, you will be pleased to hear that "Latimer House", Ludgate Hill, have just re-published them in six splendid volumes at 6/- each. They appear to be word for word as when they were printed on the pink paper of the Boys' Realm of treasured memory.

The same publishers are also offering the immortal stories by Talbot Beines Reed - "Willoughby Captains", "Fifth Form at St. Dominies", "Cock House at Fellsgerth" and the rest of them which appeared in the "B.O.P" fifty long years ago.

Goodbye to Maxwell Scott: With this issue, regretfully, we reach the end of these fascinating peeps into the past. In its comparatively brief, but exciting career, the C.D. has had many "scoops", but none that has interested its readers more than the "diaries". And knowing what we do now, I had to smile when I picked up a $\frac{1}{2}$ d Union Jack the other day. Early on in his story Maxwell Scott revealed the meagre fees he got for the complete stories he wrote for the $\frac{1}{2}$ d Union Jack and its companions. Well, in this particular number, dated December 13, 1894, the editor proudly announced he was publishing four Nelson Lee stories the following week (the whole four together were, of course, no longer than the usual one). Said he, "Up to the present

Nelson Lee stories have only appeared in the Halfpenny Marvel, and it was only by outbidding the editor of that paper that I was able to secure these exciting tales." He goes on to say that "there will be no change in price, although, of course, four stories cost the poor editor much more than one."

Past masters at telling the tale, some of those editors, weren't they? I hope you don't think I follow their example.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

P.S.: Some of you may have received a copy of the South African "Outspan" containing a fine article on the Victorian "bloods", and are wondering whom you have to thank for it. I can tell you that it came as a kindly gesture from that 100% enthusiast in that part of the world - A. J. Southway. One more of those friendly actions I like to put on record.

HERE THEY ARE AGAIN! "But who is the 'enemy' now? Who are these 'bosses' the Paddington men want to sack? How does Figgins and Company - how it reminds me of the Gem - propose to get rid of them?" Ian Mackay on the railway troubles in the "News Chronicle", June 16th.

WANTED TO BUY: Magnets No's 650—999, 1002, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1021, 1024, 1026, 1030, 1034, 1040, 1043, 1047, 1049, 1053, 1071, 1072, 1085, 1086, 1088, 1089, 1091, 1118, 1119, 1124, 1125, 1127, 1156, 1159, 1160, 1163, 1167, 1168, 1169, 1170, 1181, 1182, 1184, 1186, 1187, 1189, 1191, 1196, 1221, 1222, 1223, 1224, 1228, 1229, 1277, 1245. Robert Wilson, 484 Springburn Road, Glasgow, N.

HAVE FEW Nelson Lees, Populars, and other oddments for exchange. Odds required of any of the old boys' mags. for statistical purposes only. Condition immaterial. Collecting S.O.L. Rookwood and St. Jim's stories. Have YOU any for disposal? Loan of oddments also appreciated. - A. J. Southway, P.O. Box 3, BEACONSFIELD, Cape Province, SOUTH AFRICA.

WANTED: Aldine Publications, Turpins, Duvals, Robin Hoods, etc. E. R. Lendy, 4 Noneton Road, Dagenham, Essex.

INSPIRED BY THE CLASSICSBy Henry Steele

In the palmy days of youth I was a keen reader of the journals published by Edwin J. Brett and Charles Fox, such as "The Boys of the Empire", "Boys of England", "Boys' Champion Journal" and "The Boys' Standard". I used to revel in the fascinating stories they contained, especially the historic or old time ones.

In those far off days I was not concerned with who the authors were or from what source they derived their inspirations. As long as the story was sufficiently interesting and thrilling, that was all that mattered. As we get older we like to dive a little deeper into the matter. I have discovered the names of many of the writers (who were often anonymous) and also the fact that some of them obtained their ideas from the classics. Dumas, Ainsworth, Dickens, and Shakespeare were made use of.

In a story called "The Sword of Fate" (Boys of the Empire, 1888), the meeting of the hero with his three subsequent friends was identical with that of D'Artagnon and the Three Musketeers in Dumas' famous novel. In the Boy's Standard (1892) appeared "Claymore and Dirk". The author must have had Shakespeare's "Macbeth" in mind, for the noble hero Donald the Brave is described as the Thane of Cawdor. In "Wallace, the Hero of Scotland" (Boy's Standard, 1882) the murder of Wallace's wife by the English Governor is taken practically word for word from "The Scottish Chiefs"; by Jane Porter. "The Outlaw of the Highlands", another Boy's Standard tale, (1891) was obviously inspired by Scott's "Rob Roy". I may say that the boy's story was a great favourite of mine, so much so, that it survived a "clear out" urge that I suffered from, when many of my treasures were ruthlessly destroyed. The hero of the tale was Rob Roy. In connection with this I would like to mention that during the course of years I have made three attempts to read Scott's "Rob Roy" and it is only quite recently (during the third time) that I succeeded in getting right through it.

"St. Robert's School" and its sequel "The Student's Crime" (Boys of England, 1887) were taken from Lytton's "Eugene Aram". It appeared a little too early for me to read as a boy, but I had the satisfaction (in 1945) of visiting Knaresborough, the scene

of the famous crime. In "St. Roberts School" I presume the author relied on his imagination as this part of Aram's life is not dealt with by Lytton. In "The Sentinel of Pompeii" (Boy's Standard, 1891) Lytton once more came to the author's assistance. "Tim Ne'er-do-Well" (Boy's Standard, 1887), was founded on the well-known story of George Barnwell, immortalised by the play by Lillo. The author (Vane St. John) has a somewhat different conception of Sarah Millwood, the lady who leads George Barnwell from the path of rectitude. In "Tim Ne'er-do-Well" he calls her Lady Lucretia Lennox and introduces a Jacobite plot.

I have mentioned four Boy's Standard stories; now let me take one from Brett's "Boy's Comic Journal". In 1887 there appeared in that journal a story named "England's Hero, or Hereward the Unconquered". It is not difficult to guess where the writer got the idea from. He had of course taken Charles Kingsley's "Hereward the Wake" as a pattern. I could mention many more, but space will not permit.

There are no doubt some who do not approve of using other people's brains, but in spite of that I think we owed a debt of gratitude to those old writers for "dishing up" the classics in an appetising manner.

WANTED URGENTLY: Gems No's 356, 358, 359, and 375. Top prices paid. - Leonard Packman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

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ARE YOU INTERESTED IN FANTASY FICTION? I am. Please contact me. Sell or exchange. Henry Bartlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport.

Leaves from the Diaries of Maxwell Scott

Continuity by John P. Wood

VI

This month brings me to the conclusion of what, I hope, has been an interesting serial to the old stagers, and one which has helped the younger generation like myself to appreciate more fully the immense amount of work and thought which went into the creation and development of the Nelson Lee Saga - only real rival to the importance which Hamiltonia and Blakiana occupy in the hearts of Old Boys' literature.

In my last article we left Maxwell Scott earning more and more each year, and 1904 was no exception to the rule. Despite his wife's illness, he pegged away at his writing, completing the serials he had begun in 1903, and starting others.

"I also began a serial for the Big Budget ('The White Slave') founded on my recent visit to Tangier; but this was not published till 1905. As a result of a hard year's work, I earned the biggest income I had ever earned by writing; £661.11s.6d.

"During this year (1905) I had six serials running at various times (I had now practically ceased to write 'short' and 'long complete' stories). As serials are the most remunerative kind of work, it follows that my literary income was a big one. As a matter of fact, it was (again) the biggest I had ever earned; £733.1s.3d."

There are no references to writing in 1906 or 1907, but in 1908 Maxwell Scott notes: "In 1907 the editor of 'Chums' (Cassell) had written to me and asked me to write a serial for that paper. I agreed, invented a new detective (Martin Dale) and began writing the story at the end of the year. It was not published, however, until 1908. Later in 1908 the editor of 'Answers' commissioned me to write a series of weekly short stories with Sexton Blake as the central character. Altogether I wrote 32 of these, of which 15 were published in 1908: and then, out of sheer weariness, and despite the editor's appeals, I decline to do any more. The series was afterwards continued by other writers."

In 1909, Scott had more work offered to him than he could do. At the beginning of the year "I had the 'Answers' series on hand and a serial running in the 'Boys' Realm'. These brought in, as a rule, about £12.15s. a week. When the Realm serial stopped I had another serial starting in a Glasgow weekly paper; and by the time the 'Answers' series was discontinued (by me) I was ready with another serial for the Realm. The result of all this was that my income for the first half of the year beat all records. Alas! the second half proved as disastrous as the first had been promising."

In the second half of the year his mother died, his wife's illness was pronounced incurable and she became a cripple, his son caught scarlet fever with a subsequent heart trouble which caused him to miss two terms at school, and his young nephews, who lived next door, got diphtheria. In spite of these multifarious worries, which did not conduce to any record-breaking efforts in the way of story-writing, he finished the second serial for the Realm ('Bowled Out') and began one for the Boys' Herald ('The Winged Terror')

In 1910 Scott was commissioned by the editor of the Boys' Friend - his old friend Marshall, who had joined Harmsworths after the demise of the Big Budget - to write a school-serial. Later he was asked to write a football serial for the Boys' Realm. The football serial ("Out To Win") was "more or less of a frost, but the school yarn ('The Blot') proved so popular that I was asked to write a sequel. This I did, entitling it 'The New Broom'. It started publication on Dec. 13."

With the outbreak of war, the strain of overwork in many local appointments, coupled with the results of an accident, Scott was compelled to give up work and leave Hinderwell for Bamford, near Sheffield, where he died in 1927.

In 1915, however, the Amalgamated Press paid him the magnificent sum of £50 for the exclusive right to use the name Nelson Lee. Having obtained this right, they brought out a new penny weekly paper called "The Nelson Lee Library" which consisted of stories of Nelson Lee and Nipper. Within three months, and despite the wartime restrictions (shades of the second war casualties, Magnet and Gem!) it had achieved a circulation of nearly 70,000. Three stories for the new paper - A Miscarriage of Justice (7), The Convict's Vendetta (8) and In Borrowed Plumes (1)

in 1915 and a fourth, When Rogues Fall Out (48) in 1916, were all the writing which Scott did for the new paper. For the three stories in 1915 he received £64, and in the same year he received £96 for a serial for 'Chums'.

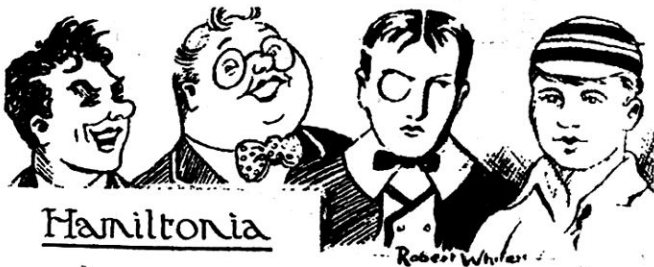
And so, we bid farewell to Maxwell Scott, doctor, friend of the countryfolk of Hinderwell and a wide surrounding district, politician, and literary genius who triumphed over personal and family troubles to give pleasure to thousands, not only of his own lifetime, but in many generations to come. His success as a writer was due to a flowing style which maintained the interest from beginning - for he had the true journalist's art of securing the interest in the very first paragraph of his story - to the end, thanks to a thoroughness which insisted on the accuracy of his facts and the topicality of his stories.

Incidentally, Maxwell Scott's son, to whom I owe a deep debt of gratitude for the facts which have formed the basis of the series which end this month, still possesses a few of the stories written by his famous father. Their titles may be of interest to collectors, and include the four Nelson Lee stories to which I referred above as Scott's only contributions to the new library.

In addition, he has the following stories in the Boys' Friend 3d Library: Bird of Prey (4), The Silver Dwarf (16), The Missing Heir (17), Nelson Lee's Pupil (19), The Great Unknown (24). The Stolen Submarine (25), Nelson Lee's Rival (34), The Football Detective (62). Well Cleared (132), The Pride of the Team (133), Nipper's Schooldays (171), The Hidden Will (132), On His Majesty's Service (301), The Silver Key (365), A Scrap of Paper (373) and The Secret of the Ring (355).

In the Boys' Friend 4d series, he possesses The White Slave (472), Detective Nipper (483) and The Iron Skull (589).

It is also interesting to note, in conclusion, that Scott most enjoyed writing 'The Silver Dwarf', 'The Iron Skull' and 'The Seven Stars'. At the end of his work on 'The Iron Skull' he happened to see in an antique shop a diminutive charm in the form of a tiny metal skull with two garnets set in the eye sockets. He immediately bought it and gave it to his wife in memory of the story it had given him so much pleasure to write.



Hamiltonia

Continued by Herbert Leckenby
with help from "Mark Zero"

I am grateful to note from my post-bag that my jottings last month seem to have been well received, and I have been asked to carry on. Well, I could certainly find plenty to write about, but I won't keep all the column to myself, for a well-known member of the circle who prefers to disguise himself as "Mark Zero" is anxious to put in an open letter from Rookwood. So I'll let him get in first. Here it is.

A Letter From Jimmy Silver

Dear chaps,

We found that ass Lovell chortling his head off in the end study, and when we investigated we found he was reading the Collectors Digest. It was the first time Raby, Newcome and I had seen your admirable little paper - but we scanned it in vain for any news of dear old Rookwood!

Perhaps a few remarks of mine will act as a refresher? When I first arrived at Rookwood a few terms ago (Schoolboys' Own No. 116) I became the victim of the three Tommy's - Dodd, Doyle and Cook. They literally flung me at Lovell who promptly wanted to fight me. Of course all ended well because I licked both Lovell and Tommy Dodd.

Great times followed. I was almost expelled (No.12 S.B.O.) owing to the plot between Mornington and Beaumont. Morny forced Beaumont to make a false statement about a missing banknote which was found on me - planted there by Morny! Their villainy became unstuck and both were expelled. Morny however effected a last minute rescue of the Head's young daughter, Dolly. I asked the Head to pardon the rascal - which he did.

Much excitement when Teddy (Putty) Grace arrived - on the back of an elephant (No. 28) "The Boy Who Was Soft". Tubby Muffin pretended to be the hero who rescued old Bulkeley from the watery depths of Croft Brook - and actually presented Bulkeley with a bill for spoiled clothing. Putty was the real hero.

Do you remember how Tubby Muffin japed us all with his spoof inheritance? He became Sir Tubby, of Rookwood (Boys' Friend 1st Oct. 30th 1920). He received the following letter:

Dear Sir,

In connection with our previous letter to you, we beg to state more explicitly the intentions of our client, Sir Tudor Muffin, of Tudor Court, your respected uncle. It is Sir Tudor's desire to adopt you as his son — baronetcy to descent to you direct — — — along with the estates of Tudor Court, Muffin Manor —

The school swallowed this and Tubby was fawned upon by all and sundry - till he was found out by Peele & Co who had been toadying to him. We had to come to Tubby's rescue or Peele & Co would have slaughtered him.

Yes, we've had some exciting times at the old school. As I sit and write the sun is sinking through the trees over by the playing fields. I shall have to close now - I think I hear Lovell's loud voice telling the world he's as hungry as the proverbial hunter. And if I'm not mistaken that's Tubby enthusiastically declaring to come along to the end study for supper.

Cheerio chaps,

JIMMY SILVER.

Well, do you remember how the editors of the papers used to swear by all the gods that Frank Richards and Martin Clifford were not one and the same? Do you recall how H. A. Hinton

wrote - in the Gem - his recollections of meeting the two, and Owen Conquest, for the first time. What a vivid imagination! I suppose it was justified at the time, but how amusing it seems in view of what we have learned since. The one and only once told me he used to receive many requests for autographs. The majority were for "Frank Richards"; a goodly number for "Martin Clifford", but few for "Owen Conquest". As Mark Zero says, "Poor old Rookwood!" I suppose the reason was the school never had a paper it could call its own, for the stories had the same masterly touch.

And by the way, I wonder if any enthusiastic reader devoted to all three schools, and requesting autographs from "all three authors" ever noticed a suspicious similarity in the signatures, for the writer of them told me he never made any attempt to disguise his hand. Ah well, it was all the more interesting - and surprising - when the whole truth did come out.

And now I want your help. Dr. Wilson, of Glasgow, in a very interesting letter (part of which appears in the "Letter Box") says: "There is a Gem I am anxious to trace. The plot goes something like this. A paper (probably Tom Merry's Weekly) is being prepared for publication. A poem by, I think, Mellish is sent in. It is in praise of Kildare. One line, referring to Kildare's prowess on the football field, runs, "Worms his way twixt halves and backs". All seems to be above-board until Kerr's eagle eye falls on the poem and he shows it to be a clever acrostic with the first word of each line running together to make the sentence, "Kildare is a worm and so say all of us." This story must have made a terrific impression on me for these details to have stuck in my mind since boyhood."

Well, can any of you name that story? I think I know one who probably can, for I can hear John Shaw saying in that quiet way of his, "Ah, yes, that was — No. —" as he has so often done before with similar problems.

Did you ever hear of the other Billy Bunter? Oh yes, there was one, and he was a schoolboy about the Owl's age. One story he appeared in was "Billy Bunter's Hamper" which would make it appear he was something like the Bunter we all know. Well, let me explain. About the time of the 3d. Gem and Magnet there was a rival paper, at the same price, called the "Vanguard" published

by Trapps, Holmes & Co. It published a complete story each week and frequently they concerned Taffy Llewellyn & Co. of a school whose name I forget. One of the prominent characters was - Billy Bunter. In fairness to the author though - his name was H. Philpott Wright - it was probably just a remarkable coincidence. Anyway, his Bunter was never destined to become a household word. The Vanguard only lived about three years, and Taffy, Billy and all the rest passed from the stage long before the end.

And, oh, here's another with a query - Thomas Johnson, of Raby Cottage, Neston. He asks if anyone can tell him the number of a Magnet and the name of the story showing on the cover Bunter standing before the blackboard on which is written something about Mr. Quelch, and that worthy demanding an explanation. Mr. Johnson thinks it appeared in 1920 or 1921. His reason for asking, he once, with a pang, tore up a pile of Magnets and that was the first one to go. He would now like to see it again - whole.

And do you recall a character in the Magnet who actually grew older? Has that got you puzzled? Well, it was - oh, dash it, if I go on there'll be room for nothing else in this issue, so I'll keep that until next month.

NEW COLLECTOR requires DIGEST Nos. 1, 5, 7 and 13. Also COLLECTOR'S MISCELLANY No. 13, and STORY PAPER COLLECTOR Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, to complete sets. A. J. Southway, P.O. Box 3, Beconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa.

COMPLETE SET 183 copies The Bullseye, 50 Bound, Buffalo Bill's; 250 Comics 1893-1939; 603 Modern Boys 4d. each; Second-Hand copies Tom Merry by Mandeville Publications, and Bunter Books (Skilton); 500 Nelson Lees 1/- each; Number 1 of the Gem; American Science Fiction 2/- each; Victorian Weeklies 4d each. Vols 1 & 2 The Captain, and 6 odd copies. S.A.E. must accompany enquiries. - Bill Martin, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London N.W.10. 'Phone Willesden 4474.

FOR SALE: Schoolgirls' Own Annual, 1929. WANTED: Magnets, 1094, 1096, 1099. Gem 916. - Ian Whitmore, 3 South Bank Lodge, Surbiton, Surrey.

Old Boys Book Club

Wood Green Meeting

The July meeting was held on Sunday 17th. Hosts the brothers Whiter, Len Packman in the chair. The chairman extended, on behalf of the club, a hearty welcome to new friends and members, especially to John Boland who came over from Dublin, Eire, to attend the meeting.

The minutes, correspondence and treasurer's report were duly dealt with.

The chairman announced that he had contacted a Mr. Gordon, who has a large selection of books for sale, and he brought a large quantity to the meeting. The club are indebted to Mr. Gordon, and both he and the chairman were afforded the club's best thanks.

Proposed by Ben Whiter and seconded by Charlie Wright that a hearty invitation to all readers of the C.D. and members of the clan to attend the September meeting of the club at East Dulwich when it is hoped that the worthy editor of the C.D., Herbert Leckenby, and Edwy Searles Brooks will be in attendance. There will be a large selection of books for sale, thanks to the chairman and Bob Blythe's endeavours. It is to be hoped that a large attendance will be present so as to make it a memorable event. The motion was carried unanimously.

All costs of catering, collecting books for sale and other incidentals to be paid out of club funds.

A sub-committee was formed to discuss the Christmas social consisting of Bob Blythe, Ben and Bob Whiter.

The next meeting is to be held at 41 Friar Road, Brighton, 6th Len Packman to arrange cheap fares. Will all those intending to travel meet under clock at Victoria Station by 9 a.m. so as to catch 10 o'clock train. It is hoped to be able to have the son of Maxwell Scott, the Rev. Staniforth, in attendance. The club's thanks are due to Jack Wood for supplying the address of the latter gentleman.

An object search saw Ian Whitmore, John Geal and John Young successful in finding all the objects.

A general quiz followed which resulted in Len Packman as once again winning easily, Charles Wright and Bob Blythe 2nd.

Eleanor Packman 3rd.

Attendance: Len, Jose and Eleanor Packman, Bob and Laura Blythe, John Young, Harry Homer, Sidney Godfrey, W. R. Wall, John Boland, Charlie and Olive Wright, John Geal, Ian Whitmore, Ben and Bob Whiter, Mr. and Mrs. Dabb.

BENJAMIN G. WHITER.

Blakiana (continued)

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY - 1941

Third Series: 1 - 14

June 1941

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and | |
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| 14 | The Man From Norway | Gilbert Chester |

+ Featuring Capt. Dack.

++ Reprint of No. 356 S.B.L. 2nd Series.

+++ Reprint of U.J. No. 1245.

NOTE: Owing to unforeseen difficulties the UNION JACK list of titles cannot appear this month, but will be included in our September issue together with the first instalment of titles for the S.B.L.

URGENT: We are now only just over four months away from the publication date of the third C.D. ANNUAL and it is requested that all articles, drawings etc. intended for publication should reach 10 erw Wen, Cardiff, before the end of September. Contributions are urgently needed.

The Nelson Lee Column

All queries and enquiries to Robert Blythe,
46 Carleton Road, Holloway, London, N.7.

Last month I promised to give some clues concerning the two authors who are unknown to us, in the hope that U.J. collectors may be able to help.

We'll take O.S. Nos. 3, 6, 11 and 12 first. Mr. Burrows suggested that these were by the one author, and since reading them I am inclined to agree with him. The first clue is the most helpful, I think, because in No.3 it states that it is by the author of "The Mystery of The Five Towns" and "The Case of the Turkish Bonds". This is the only one of the six stories we are querying that gives this information. The detective in this story is Inspector Quax of Scotland Yard; other police officials mentioned are:- No.6 Det. Inspector Burnwood of Scotland Yard and Inspector Ryles of Bow Street. No. 11. No police mentioned. No. 12 Inspector Lorriegen of the Downshire County Police and Inspector Fewings. All these stories have the following in common. All feature the innocent young men wrongly accused, and the ever loving sweetheart who believes in him and promises to wait for him, for ever if necessary. The passages between the lovers sometimes descend to sheer bathos and are reminiscent of Victorian lady novelists at their worst. Another point is that the author has a penchant for strange sounding surnames such as Garker, Sir Reevely Chart Nierstein, etc. With Nos. 5 and 14, however, I'm stumped, as I cannot find anything which might give us a lead. There is a slight reference in No.5 to St. Ninian's, it's true, but the story is not by Scott. Regretfully, therefore, we shall have to leave these two. With the others I have great hopes that someone will remember the titles or recognise the style.

Whilst reading some early Boys' Realms recently I made the interesting discovery that the stories appearing in the B.R. were reprinted, slightly cut, in the Nugget 3d. Lib. later in the same year. Reading these practically unknown St. Franks stories has satisfied me that they are all original and that they were never written by E.S.B.; they weren't even a good imitation.

This particular series ran in the Boys' Realm from approx. No.63 (1920 to No.183 (1922)); at first they were mostly serials, but later complete stories appeared frequently.

The query from Mr. Southway of S. Africa this month is "Can we have a list of the St. Franks stories, and serial Nos. that appeared in the "Gem" and if any are reprints, from which N.L. were they taken?"

Commencing with N.L. No. 23, 3rd N.S. appeared three stories concerning the adventures of the Removites in China and their efforts to rescue Young Ching who had been kidnapped. The third story was the last issue of the N.L. and the yarn continued in the form of a serial in the Gem No. 1331 and terminated in No.1343. The whole series were reprints of the Chinese adventure that appeared in the N.L. 1st N.S. 12-19. Following this came "The White Giants of El Dorado" Nos. 1344 to 1354. This serial, although original, was largely based on the famous El Dorado series in the N.L. O.S. 265-274.

Next came a serial called "Treasure Isle" which, although I haven't read it, I feel sure is a reprint. Later, when I've had a chance to read a copy, I'll let you know for certain. This serial ran from No.1355 to 1365. Then came "Ghost River Range" from 1366 to 1376, reprinted from N.L. O.S. 320-327.

The following series was original and was called "The School from Down Under" running from No. 1377-1387. "The Ten Talons of Teaz" (Nos.1388-1398) was also original. Nos.1399-1404 "Handforth the Ghost Hunter", and 1405-1431 "The Secret World" are reprints of a famous N.L. series, that in which the Removites go to Northeustria. The first part is reprinted from N.L. 1st N.S. 34 and 35. The second from 36-43. Gem Nos.1432-1435 contained a serial called "Mystery Mill", but here again I'm not sure whether it's a reprint or not; if it is, I'm almost certain it's from N.L. 1st N.S. No.102 "The Mystery of the Poisoned River". Finally, we came to "The Black Hand at St.Franks". This serial was original and ran from No.1436 to No.1448. And with this latter number the last original St. Franks yarn ever to be written by E.S.B. finished. An inglorious finale to a grand paper.

And so to our regular features, the series and the titles. Just to relieve the monotony, let's have things the other way

way round this month. First, then, the titles.

O.S. No. 211, The Trapping of Starke; 212, The Prefect's Revenge; 213, The Schoolboy Adventurers; 214, North African Skies; 215, Into the Arid Desert; 216, The Treasure of El Safre; 217, The River of Fire; 218, Castaway Island; 219, The Prisoners of the Cavern; 220, The Sea of Doom; 221, Alexis the Mysterious; 222, The Great Fire at St. Franks; 223, St. Franks in London; 224, The Yellow Band; 225, Sir Monty's Ordeal; 226, The Mystery of Reed's Wharf; 227, The Haunted School; 228, The Fat Boy of St. Franks (intro. Fatty Little); 229, Back to the Old School; 210, The Sack for Nelson Lee.

and now the series:

1st N.S. Nos. 26-33, St. Franks on its Honour; 34-43 Northeastrian Series (note 34 & 35 Christmas at Handforth Towers); 44-50, The Great Flood at St. Franks; 51-54, The Funk of St. Franks; (intro. Harry Gresham). 55-60, The Fresh Air Friends; 61-67, Congo Adventure; 68-71, The Feud between the Remove and Fourth (No. 71 Bernard Forrest expelled); 72-75, Intro. Alan Castleton (Note: A series featuring Castleton's twin brother appeared in the "Gem" at the same time); 76-79, The "Death" of Walter Church; 80-81, Armistice Day and St. Franks in Flanders.

Blakiana (Continued from p. 231)

Blake is set a rather ticklish problem which had, as so often before, baffled the Yard. Pedro was well to the fore in this non-war-action war story. The part played by chemistry in the first World War was perhaps not so great as in the one recently ended, but nevertheless it did play a somewhat important part, especially on the German side of the fence. In U.J. No. 655 we were treated to a story called "The Affair Of The Dutch Merchant" by Lewis Jackson and featuring that amazing character Leon Kestrel who was mixed up in matters of national importance. In the German mind Britain shuffled sleepily along the path of progress hindered and dragged by the bickering of an antiquated coterie of legal quibblers, while the master race, in the vanguard, recognised with clear insight the true position of the chemist in the world's affairs. Blake, having studied chemistry intently was the man to solve the case of the mobilised chemists so it seems, for he brought a rather unique case to a successful conclusion and it still makes me sit back and think. It was NOT so different as this last war after all. Shades of "The Small Back Room".

(To Be Continued)

(Blakiana contd p.220)



That Certain Liveliness Continues!

London, July 4, 1949.

Dear Editor,

I am very sorry if my remarks re Mr. Chapman have not met with approval from certain members of the clan. But I fail to understand Mr. Fayne's reproof, after his Annual article when he stated that Warwick Reynolds' Christmas cover design was "hideous". Surely it is worse to criticise the work of an artist dead than one who is still alive. Nevertheless, if I have offended certain members, I stand corrected. My humble apologies, gentlemen!

ROBERT H. WHITER.

And A Champion for Chapman

484, Springburn Road,
Glasgow, N. 6/7/49.

Dear Editor,

The July C.D. is a grand number and my preliminary skim-through confirms your own opinion of its undoubted liveliness. Mr. Fayne puts in a word for Chapman. Here I jump straight into the arena and would fain let the wind of my displeasure ruffle your editorial calm, if I can get away with mixed metaphor. Chapman and Greyfriars, MacDonald and St. Jim's: these seem to me to be inseparable pairs like Heloise and Abelard or tripe and onions. If you want stolid and meticulous accuracy in your illustrations, then Chapman is not the one for you. You can get that kind of thing in the diagrams of Euclid and who wants to look at them? Chapman's drawings remind me of that poem of Herrick's beginning "a sweet disorder in the dress". Away with your circles, straight lines and isosceles triangles. Let me have a flexible outline indicative of life: and Chapman has this in full measure. Have you ever noticed his backgrounds? A stile with a distant wood and stream: the front of a country inn: the corner of a cottage: all little gems of artistry. And have a look at his drawings of various parts of Greyfriars in the Holiday Annuals. The main entrance, the cloisters and Big Side: they cannot be bettered. Oh yes, give me Chapman every time.

I had an interesting letter from Frank Richards the other day in reply to the note I sent him in praise of the new Tom Merry

book. That was a rattling good story and I can't say how much I looking forward to the others which are to follow.

With keen anticipation of our future correspondence,

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT WILSON.

My Word! This is Interesting!

4, Dixon Road, South Norwood,
London, S.E. 25.

5th July, 1949.

Déar Mr. Leckenby,

Thank you for No. 31 of the most welcome "Digest".

A very bright number indeed.

I was interested in Mr. Medcraft's letter about the original illustrator of the Billy Bunter stories.

Hutton Mitchell was the first artist to illustrate these stories and he thus has the credit of first portraying Billy Bunter. I remember it well. Mitchell could have had the job indefinitely but he was always behind with his drawings and at length the editor just could not stand the delays any longer. Mitchell was a very swift worker and could dash off a set of pen and ink drawings in jig-time, but he would not start work until the very last moment — and sometimes after. A man of considerable erudition, a brilliant conversationalist, a painter and a novelist who wrote at least one novel, he just would not get down to the steady grind demanded by the A.P. So somebody else took on the job of illustrating the Magnet.

I have been waiting for somebody to mention Mitchell, whom I knew well.

I enclose stamps for the number for which, again, many thanks. All my salaams.

Yours ever,

HUGH W. FENNELL.

Choice Easter Eggs!

June 22nd, 1949.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

I won't tell you how much I have enjoyed the C.D., or you will think I have taken to flattering editors!

I have just written "Trouble for Three", which is a Felgate story for the new periodical which will be coming along some time. Now I am busy on "Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals", which will be published next Easter. Just writing the last chapter thereof.

More power to your elbow, my dear boy, and wider and wider circulation to that most excellent and unequalled of magazines, the C.D.

With kind regards, Always yours,
FRANK RICHARDS.

July 8th, 1949.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for the July C.D. and for your letter therewith. Yes, another Bunter book is now complete, and Frank Richards is busy at the present moment on "Billy Bunter's Benefit", which will most likely be published along with the Cannibal story next Easter. Our old friend Wibley comes to the fore in this story.

Kindest regards, Always yours sincerely,
FRANK RICHARDS.

Fresh Fields for C.D.

University of California,
The University Library,
Los Angeles 24, California.
June 10, 1949.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

I would appreciate it very much if you could tell me if we could purchase the back file of your COLLECTORS' DIGEST and whether we could subscribe to it currently. I will look forward to your advice with much interest.

Yours truly,

ROBERT VOSPER,
Assistant Librarian.

Another Popular Author Writes

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

Many thanks for sending me the current issue of the Collector's Digest which I found most interesting. I was nearly writing to you at the time of the broadcast which I felt would be just up your street, but on hearing it, I was, like you, greatly disappointed. I feel they had to cover too much ground; that it would have been better to have started just before the turn of the century and carried on up to about twenty years ago, a period in which, I feel, journalism for boys was in its hey day.

I met Staniforth on a few occasions, but I went to Pearson's to be sub on the Big Budget shortly before the publication of their new paper for boys, the Leader, so the trip up the river was before my time.

No, I was not R. L. Hadfield. I have an idea I wrote one or two Sexton Blake's in the days when they were unsigned, and then when, as your contributor mentions, greater stress was laid on actual detective work, I did several. The only "Blake" man I knew at all well was Norman Goddard (Mark Darran). He was my chief on the old Penny Illustrated Paper at one time, and was killed in the first World War. He introduced the character of P.C. Spearing into the stories.

I am enclosing a cutting from last week's Kent Messenger which I thought might interest you.

With renewed thanks for the interesting and well-done paper, and all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

C. MALCOLM HINCKES.

(It will be noticed that Mr. Hincks' reference to Mark Darran supports our comments on him in the "Authors' Who's Who" in the last Annual. - H.L.)

WANTED: Nelson Lee (old series) 17, 30, 78, 107, 114, 120, 352, 396, 470. Gem 1351, 1420, 1423, 1425, 1444. Boys' Realm (new series) 38, 39, 44, 91, 92, 127, 139, 323 to 331. Schoolboy's Own Lib. 4. Boy's Friend Lib. (old series) 514. Marvel, volume One (1894). Burrow, Albert Square, Yeadon, Leeds.

WANTED: Nelson Lees No.5, 453, 476, 500, 412, 328-334; 357. Chums for sale. L. M. Allen, 3 Montgomery Drive, Sheffield 7.



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

THE ROUND TABLE

August 1949

The headquarters of Blakiana has had what one might call a "windfall". I have just come into possession of a collection of UNION JACKS and S.B.Ls that would make the mouth of any Blake collector water. And just imagine, this wonderfully preserved collection of some 600 copies came to me all the way from a fellow collector in the U.S.A. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to rope in some much wanted issues from the other side of the "pond". It does, however, only go to show the widespread fame of our favourite sleuth, for it is very obvious that my transatlantic colleague is as keen as I am to complete his collection of favourite Blake stories. I mention this bit of news at the start of my editorial feature in order to draw your attention to the advertisement in this issue of the C.D. The books and papers for sale are those duplicates that I have thus acquired and I expect there are quite a number of readers who will wish to take this unique opportunity of adding to their own little stock. I advise all who are interested to let me have their wants without delay. I have purposely split the collection up into years and think that this method of disposal will be more acceptable to the average collector who wishes to fill in gaps. Details of the numbers available will be sent to anyone asking for same but I must point out that delay in ordering might mean a disappointment, for I shall accept

orders in strict rotation. So order YOUR requirements now in case you are too late!

Some weeks ago I discovered the address of Mr. Anthony Parsons, who is a great favourite amongst current Blake fans, and wrote him at some length. A few days ago I was delighted to have a reply from him in very cordial terms. I am not at liberty to publish his remarks at the moment but hope to be able to let you all have some interesting information ere long.

So far only two Blakians have let me know their favourite stories in the Blake saga. As you know, this information is required for the welcome newcomer to our circle, Mr. John Drummond. I again ask ALL readers to let me have their idea of the best Blake story they have ever read. Anyway, for the benefit of Mr. Drummond and any other reader who might be interested, here are the ideas received up to the time of writing. (a) from Mr. John Gocher Jnr of Sudbury. He thinks the following two stories are unsurpassed although there are several others he has enjoyed tremendously.

(1) "The Crime On The Heath" by C. Vernon Frost and (2) "The Case Of The Murdered Caretaker" by Clifford Gates.

(b) from Mr. Rex Dolphin of Amersham. He cannot narrow his selection down to less than five yarns with three close seconds. He really favours the whole Confederation series (the original series) but as single stories are demanded his selection is as follows:

(1) "The Man I Killed" (Hardinge) (2) Riders Of The Sands" (Quiroule), (3) The White Salute (Skene), (4) The Victim Of Black Magic (Teed), (5) The Broken Melody (Skene). The three near favourites are (1) Suspended From Duty (Evans), (2) Carnation Wreath Mystery (Hincks) and (3) The Place Of Fire (Hayter). Rex thinks that a symposium of readers' ideas on this subject would be very interesting, and I agree. So please let me have YOUR ideas.

In conclusion I would like to thank all those readers who sent me information re the S.B.L. 1st Series required for the forthcoming list publication.

Cheerio for now,

H. MAURICE BOND.

BLAKE - HIS EARLIER DAYS AND CHRONICLERS

Part II

by Walter Webb

The policy of anonymity was reverted to the following week when a yarn called "Champion Of The Channel" was published. At this time there were many attempts being made to swim the English Channel. Captain Webb's success in so doing having spurred on

others of both sexes to try and emulate his feat. It is interesting to recall that in the "Skipper's" Weekly Chat page at the end of the preceding issue, the editor gave a list of nine hopeful aspirants, at the head of which was the name of Annette Kellerman whom he described as "admirably suited by nature for the task she has taken in hand, being a beautifully formed girl of eighteen and a half years of age". It may be remembered that on the strength of her swimming prowess, Annette Kellerman had a brief career on the screen, but, unlike Esther Williams in this modern age, she did not meet with the same success on celluloid that she did in the water, and soon faded out.

"Champion Of The Channel" I have traced as being by that ace boys' sports story writer Arthur S. Hardy. Even at that early stage in the history of the Union Jack, Hardy was no newcomer - I have records of his stories way back in 1890, which speaks highly for his staying powers when it is recollected that he was writing for "Detective Weekly" in 1935 - forty-five years later!

Returning to the subject on the policy of anonymity, it is interesting to record that one story, the first early revival of Blake stories, "Sexton Blake's Triumph", had the names of two authors attached to it. An announcement in the previous issue stated that the story was the conception of Alec G. Pearson; but when it appeared during the following week Arnold Davis was again given as the name of the author.

When the second of the revival stories was published - "Cunning Against Skill", Tinker was already in Blake's employ, although this was the first story in which the famous assistant appeared. The author, Herbert Maxwell, explained the situation in this way:

Half making up his mind to retire, Sexton Blake had dismissed his servants (apparently he was almost surrounded by a small army of them in those far off days), leaving only Tinker, whom he had picked up off the streets, a homeless waif, in his employ, to look after his London office whilst he took one of his periodic trips into the country, to seek solitude and quietness, away from the persistent demands by would-be clients for his service, and the many and varied appeals for financial and other aid by others.

In issue No.62 appeared another Blake yarn, the title of which was "The Mystery Of Hilton Royal". Arnold Davies was given as the name of the author, but on this occasion it did not cover the identity of Alec G. Pearson.

(To be concluded)

SEXTON BLAKE AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

by H.M. Bond

Part 2. The Perilous Days

The American master-crook Ezra Q. Maitland again came to the fore in a spy story entitled "The Case Of The Agent From Austria" in U.J. No.600 and this was immediately followed by "An Officer and A Gentleman" (601). No.602 told a very interesting story of a man who came over to England with the Canadian Contingent and of the peculiar situations brought about by a curious mixed identity. It was called "The Case Of The Canadian Brothers" and Blake and Finker soon unravelled the tangle. Some weeks later Blake was involved in a crime in a barbeque. "The Clue Of The Khaki Cloth" rather explains itself. (See No.610). Probably Blake was never in such danger as in the next story in No.611. "His German Brother" or "When Britain Fought For Right" is a story that simply oozes patriotism. The great detective visited the scenes of action in Turkey in "The Prisoner Of The Dardanelles" (617) and became a bit of an outlaw in the very next yarn. "Outside The Three Mile Limit" in which he again sets out to outwit the Germans at sea. Again a trip abroad in 621. Italy this time in "The Vengeance Of The Black Hand" a story of the infamous secret society which terrorised that country during the war. The next war story was mild in comparison, although "The Men Who Made Good" or "A Soldier's Atonement" was definitely a war story in which Blake played a most important part. (No.628). Spies again to the fore in No.634. "In The Heart Of London" things went on which gave Blake plenty of scope for his talents and this proved to be a most exciting story of espionage in the great metropolis. Yet another angle of war was apperant in the next real Blake war story in No.638 entitled "The Case Of The Prisoner Of War". The Cover of U.J. No.643 showed a background of London by night with the searchlights in full action. "In Darkest London" proved to be a most exciting war yarn without even leaving the city. (No.643). In No.645 Blake has a real task to perform for as the title suggested he really was "On War Service" and the story, which was set in Belgium was probably the most exciting war story of the year, 1916. It was certainly Blake's most exciting case for that year. The story of the sleuth's Secret Mission was very interesting - in fact it still is despite the years that have passed since. "The Case Of The Missing Airman" (646) was another story set in "the city of dreadful night" as the Germans fondly believed was the case after their Zeppelin raids. We now move along to No.650 and "The Case Of The Khaki Araket" (favourite colour wasn't it?) and here

(Continued p.223)

BOYS' "MAGS" AT £1 A TIME

In an upstairs flat, in a quiet London street, there are hundreds of old boys' magazines. They are the collection of old copies of the pre-war school-story papers, got together by Mr. I. G. Packman, 25, Archdale-road, a civil servant.

So keenly are these paper-worms after by some 500 collectors all over the country, and money more scarce, that many of them, to be bought new for 3d. just before the war, and probably sold off on second-hand bookstalls for three or four pence, now fetch a cash, and scarce numbers, or one needed to complete a series, fetch charge hands for £1 a time.

For some weeks Mr. Packman has been advertising widely for four 1915 numbers of the "Gem" and offering £1 each for them. So far he has not got them.

Mr. Packman, a co-founder of the Old Boys' Book Club, an organisation of some 50 keen collectors of boys' literature, has been a follower of Billy Bunter, Harry Wharton, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and the other friends of our school-days, for most of his life.

HOW HE STARTED

He read their adventures regularly as an infant at a customer until he was 20, and ever, as a schoolboy, eagerly pursued back numbers. When he was 30 his interest was re-awakened when he accidentally brought a "Magnet" to see what it was like these days. That started him collecting.

He kept it up until he had to go to Madrid during the war, when he sold his collection, but he was delighted to find one or two "Magnets" on sale even in the Spanish capital. After the war he started again, and in 1946, with a Holloway collector, he founded the club.

Collectors include schoolmasters, clergymen and an Irish bishop, and they are to be found in Australia, Canada, N. Africa, and the West Indies.

In Dulwich east-street, there are hundreds of old copies of the pre-war school-story papers, got together by Mr. I. G. Packman, 25, Archdale-road, a civil servant. So keenly are these paper-worms after by some 500 collectors all over the country, and money more scarce, that many of them, to be bought new for 3d. just before the war, and probably sold off on second-hand bookstalls for three or four pence, now fetch a cash, and scarce numbers, or one needed to complete a series, fetch charge hands for £1 a time.

Their magazine, published in different boys' authors, "A Blakina" section for the British Blakina school, and a "Nelson Law Column." Their annual, of which two numbers have been published, is a formidable reference work which will tell you who wrote almost any boys' magazine story from 1900 onwards.

A large deal of their interest, however, centres in the indefatigable Charles Hamilton "Frank Richards," "Maggie" Clifford, and 38 other pen-names as well, who kept two of the most popular magazines, the "Magnet" and the "Gem" almost entirely supplied with stories week by week for year after year. "He is the grand old man of them all," says Mr. Packman.

SPECIALISES IN THE "GEM"

Mr. Packman is a collector of old books in the "Gem," and Mr. Packman, as he has a bucket of some 40 of her specimens away, after showing them to an overseas collector, remarked: "That lot's worth 'em if we ever wanted to sell 'em, which we don't."

He and his friends are concerned at the loss of such literature for boys of today. "They are very, very badly off for it," says Mr. Packman. One or two of the old magazines carry an "Champion," "The Rover," "Hesperus," and "The Adventure Library," but there is a market for the "Champion" type of school story, he is sure, if only a publisher could be induced to start such a series.

When old copies of the "Magnet" appear on bookstalls,

they say, they are snapped up, not only by collectors, but by modern youngsters, and the new series of full-length novels which "Frank Richards" and "Martin Clifford" are now writing about the old characters are "selling like hotcakes." And 12-year-old Eleanor Packman "loves the old stories."

Already two exhibitions of the old magazines have drawn large crowds in York and Wellington. Soon the club hope to organize one in London, and they have their eye on Dulwich Library.

Tom Merry

BILLY BUNTER fans have already had their fill of Greyfriars stories and their beseeching purchases have encouraged publishers to look now to the grey-bearded boys who, when young, followed the weekly adventures of St. Jim's school-boys.

Tom Merry and Co. of St. Jim's Mandeville Publications (17-19) by Martin Clifford, deals with the computations of boarding school life. Its central character is the noble, unspoiled Quince D'Arcy, whose benevolence leads him into all sorts of trouble.

Martin Clifford, who is, in fact, Frank Richards, is so well steeped in the lore of these fictitious schools that he makes the school-boy life-like and despite their amazing escapades credible.

BILLY BUNTER

IT was a real pleasure to see ("Everybody's," July 3) the name of Mr. Frank Richards, the creator of Billy Bunter and other world-famous school characters—and I am glad to have an opportunity of thanking him for many years of unalloyed writing.

It is my considered opinion that if such writers as the "Magnet," "Gem" and "Boys' Friend" had not lapsed there would be only a fraction of the juvenile delinquency there is today. Mr. Richards and writers of his class gave us characters whom we admired, and others whom we despised. There is no question about the type we desired to emulate, and of their effect on the general trend of our lives.—W. E. Cox, Mansfield Terrace, Manchester, England.