

The Collectors' Digest Annual

Christmas 1949 - 3rd Year

Journey to Yesterday

They
Thrilled
you Once

These were
the Golden
Years!



Fond Memories of
Christmas' Past!

7/9

Collectors' Digest Annual
Christmas 1949
No. 3.

EDITORS

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Foreword

Dear Fellow Collectors,

Here is our third Annual; we trust you will consider it at least as good as its predecessors, and a worthy companion for the Christmas fire-side. Christmas is a time for looking back; we feel sure it will help you embark on a journey into yesterday.

Once again we have had the help of a grand little band of contributors. One of our biggest problems has been to find room for all the contributions offered. In this we haven't quite succeeded, even though we have given more pages than originally intended. We have to smile when we remember that when we first started the monthly someone thought it might soon dry up for want of copy.

A glance at the "Who's Who" will show that many new members have joined our circle during the year, and some of them are among the most active and enthusiastic.

Readers will find enclosed this year a Voting Paper. When you have thoroughly digested the contents of this year's effort, we would like you to complete and return this. It will help us with next year's, which we are already planning. You can mention articles you don't like if there are any.

Suggestions too, will be welcomed, and get down to writing for next year's as soon as you like.

In conclusion, the old, old wish, a Happy Christmas, a Prosperous New Year, and good hunting.

Yours sincerely,

Herbert Leckenby.
H. Maurice Bond.

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The Gem Reprints

Compiled by Leonard Packman

Thanks to the courtesy of John R. Shaw who kindly loaned his files

(Editor's Foreword.- The following list, carefully compiled by Leonard Packman, should prove of great value to Gem collectors, especially the older ones who remember the original stories. It so often happens that they are particularly desirous of obtaining some favourite story of their youth, but owing to their scarcity are unable to do so, As a result they have to fall back on the reprint, if it was reprinted. The difficulty has been tracing it, for as will be seen, in practically every instance the reprint was given a new title, in many cases, too, quite different to the original. Well, here you have original and reprint side by side.

Another interesting point about it is this. It is well known that very few of the "imitation" stories were reprinted - they didn't deserve to be. A check with John R. Shaw's will confirm this, and at the same time strengthen his claim that his lists are reliable.)

GEM LIBRARY 1st SERIES

<u>Original Number and Title</u>	<u>Reprint Number and Title</u>
3. Tom Merry's Schooldays.	1221. Tom Merry - New Boy.
7. Our Captain.	1222. The Hero of Clavering.
9. Tom Merry on the Warpath.	1223. Tom Merry's Challenge.
11. Tom Merry at St. Jim's.	1224. Goodbye Clavering - Hallo to St. Jim's.
12. The Terrible Three.	1225. Tom Merry Gets Going.
13. Tom Merry's Mistake.	1226. The Mystery Master.
14. The Master's Secret.	1227. A Gangster at St. Jim's.
16. On the Trail.	1228. The Schoolboy "'Tecs"'. 1229. The St. Jim's Menagerie.
17. High Jinks at St. Jim's.	1230. Tom Merry & Co. on Strike.
18. Tom Merry's Washing Day.	1231. Tom Merry, the Boy 'Tec.
19. Honours Divided.	1232. The St. Jim's Speed Cops.
20. Tom Merry's Day Out.	1233. St. Jim's on the Stage.
21. The Triple Alliance.	1234. The Great Stamp Mystery.
22. The Merry Hobby Club.	1235. Under a Convict's Thumb.
23. Tom Merry's Ruse.	1277 } Sacked from St. Jim's.
24. Expelled from St. Jim's.	1277 }
25. Tom Merry's Camp.	1236. Gay Dogs of St. Jim's.
26. The Smart Set at St. Jim's.	1237. The Japer of St. Jim's.
27. The Return of Monty Lowther.	1239. The Football Fake.
28. Playing the Game.	1240. The Schoolboy Smugglers.
29. Tom Merry in Trouble.	1241. Easy Terms for the Saints.
30. A Regular Rascal.	1243. The "Big Nine" at St. Jim's.
31. The Nine Detectives.	1244. Journalists of St. Jim's.
32. Head Cook and Bottle Washer.	1245. Tom Merry - Editor.
33. Tom Merry's Weekly.	1246. Banned by the "Beaks".
34. By Order.	1238. The Gunpowder Plot at St. Jim's.
35. Spoofed.	1247. Lovelorn Gussy.
36. D'Arcy Romance.	1242. St. Jim's for Merry Christmas.
37. Tom Merry's Christmas.	1248. The Sneak of the Shell.
38. A Sneak.	

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|------------------------------|--|
| 40. Stony Broke. | 1249. The Mystery of the Hut. |
| 42. Figgins' Fig Pudding. | 1250. Puddings and Pains at St. Jim's. |
| 43. Tom Merry's Double. | 1251. Tom Merry the Second. |
| 44. Tom Merry & Co. in Town. | 1252. St. Jim's on the Spree. |
| 45. Figgins & Co's Failure. | 1253. The Nobbling of "Nobbler Jim". |
| 46. Danger Ahead. | 1255. The Treaty of St. Jim's. |
| 47. Tom Merry's Quest. | 1256. The St. Jim's Magician. |
| 48. Pets of St. Jim's. | 1257. Showmen of St. Jim's. |

End of 1st. series

GEM 1d. SERIES

Orig. No.	<u>Title</u>	Reprint No.	<u>Title</u>
1.	The Gathering of the Clans.	1254.	The Treaty of St. Jim's.
2.	Miss Priscilla's Mission.	1258.	Priscilla the Peacemaker.
3.	King of the Castle.	1259.	The Vengeance of "Nobbler Jim".
4.	St. Jim's to the Rescue.	1260.	Sportsmen of St. Jim's.
5.	D'Arcy the Dude.	1261.	Gussy Goes Goofy.
6.	The Invaders.	1262.	Invaders of St. Jim's.
8.	The Tell-tale.	1263.	Mellish - the Mischief Maker.
9.	The Bogus Detective.	1264.	Just like Gussy.
10.	Tom Merry's Bazaar.	1265.	Salesmen of St. Jim's.
11.	Tom Merry's Struggle.)	1266.	The Kidnapped Cricketers.
12.	St. Jim's Leads.)	1267.	The St. Jim's Parliament.
13.	Skimpole's New Idea.	1268.	Prime Minister of St. Jim's.
14.	The Parliamentary Candidate.)	1269.	Detective D'Arcy, Dud.
15.	Told on the Telephone.	1270.	The Night Raiders.
17.	D'Arcy's Misadventure.	1271.	Redskins of St. Jim's.
19.	The Mysterious Hamper.	1272.	Cousin Ethel's Champion.
20.	Blake & Co's Triumph.	1273.	The Mystery of the Missing Hair.
21.	Skimpole's Fancies.	1274.	St. Jim's under Canvas.
23.	Tom's Terrible Time.	1275.	The Rival Campers.
24.	Tom Merry in Camp.	1276.	Skimpole the Inventor.
25.	The Rival Camps.	1278.	Tom Merry & Co. on the Spree.
26.	Skimpole's Airship.	1279.	"All Aboard the Condor".
27.	The Head's Surprise.	1280.	The Floating School.
28.	Tom Merry Afloat.	1281.	The Ocean Rebels.
29.	St. Jim's at Sea.	1282.	The Shipwrecked School.
30.	The School on the Steamer.	1283.	Skimpole the Deep-See Diver.
31.	The Wreck of the Floating School.	1284.	Detectives of St. Jim's.
32.	Skimpole's Salvage.	1285.	Cousin Ethel's Birthday.
33.	The Boy Detectives.	1286.	Tom Merry & Co. at the Zoo.
34.	D'Arcy's Secret.	1287.	The Fighting Flag.
35.	The Joker of St. Jim's.	1288.	The Sixth-Former's Secret.
36.	D'Arcy Minor.		
37.	Darrell's Secret.		

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|--|---|
| 38. The Scouts of St. Jim's. | 1289. Boy Scouts of St. Jim's. |
| 39. The Fifth at St. Jim's. | 1290. The Guys of St. Jim's. |
| 40. The Disappearance of Wally. | 1291. Wally the Runaway. |
| 41. The Ghost of St. Jim's. | 1296. The Ghost of St. Jim's. |
| 42. Fatty No. 2. | 1292. Fatty Wynn's Prize Porker. |
| 43. The Schoolboy Jockey. | 1293. The Schoolboy Jockey. |
| 44. Tom Merry & Co. at the Fair. | 1294. Tom Merry & Co. at the Fair. |
| 45. The Plot Against the Head. | 1295. The Rival Scouts. |
| 46. Tom Merry's Voyage. | 1297. America Bound. |
| 47. Tom Merry in New York. | 1298. Tom Merry & Co. in New York. |
| 48. Tom Merry in Chicago. | 1299. Gussy "Discovers" America. |
| 49. Tom Merry in the Rockies. | 1300. Tom Merry & Co. Out West. |
| 50. Tom Merry & Co. Out West. | 1301. Gussy the Bronco Buster. |
| 51. The Ragging of Buck Finn. | 1302. The Cowboy of St. Jim's. |
| 52. A Lad of the League. | 1303. The Mystery Footballer. |
| 53. D'Arcy Minor's Chum. | 1304. Hero and Cad. |
| 54. The Son of a Sailor. | 1305. The Call of the Sea. |
| 56. The Cad of St. Jim's. | 1354. The Worst Boy at St. Jim's. |
| 58. Skimpole's Scholarship. | 1306. The Swot of St. Jim's. |
| 60. Tom Merry in Liverpool. | 1307. Tom Merry & Co. in Liverpool. |
| 61. Smuggled to School. | 1308. Smuggled to School. |
| 64. The St. Jim's Inventor. | 1309. The Schoolboy Inventor. |
| 66. The Hypnotist of St. Jim's. | 1310. The Taming of the Tyrant. |
| 67. Tom Merry's Week-end. | 1311. The Mystery of Eastwood House. |
| 69. A Son of the Empire. | 1312. The Coming of Kangaroo. |
| 70. Tom Merry's Sub-Editor. | 1313. Well Hit, Walleby. |
| 71. Sent to Coventry. | 1314. Chums on the Road. |
| 72. Tom Merry's Triumph. | 1315. The Rival Schools. |
| 73. Played Out. | 1316. St. Jim's for Ever. |
| 75. Gussy's Guest. | 1317. Bunter at St. Jim's. |
| 76. Skimpole's Discovery. | 1318. Skimpole's Will-Power Went. |
| 79. Jack Blake's Plot. | 1319. The Jape of the Term. |
| 80. The St. Jim's Inventors. | 1320. The Robot of St. Jim's. |
| 82. Tom Merry's Trust. | 1321. The Treasure of Rylcombe Woods. |
| 83. The School-House Secret. | 1322. Billy Binks "Burglar". |
| 84. Sacked. | 1323. Barred by his Chums. |
| 85. The Haunted Tower. | 1324. The Secret of the Tower. |
| 86. Miss Priscilla's Peril. | 1325. Ructions at St. Jim's. |
| 87. The Terrible Three's Test. | 1326. Miss Priscilla's Bodyguard. |
| 88. The D'Arcy Cup. | 1327. The D'Arcy Cup. |
| 89. Tom Merry's Trip. | 1328. The Boy with Too Many Friends. |
| 91. Tom Merry & Co. Abroad. | 1554. Tom Merry's Holiday Party. |
| 92. Tom Merry in Paris. | 1555. Gussy in Gay Paree. |
| 93. The Terrible Three's Christmas
Party. | 1556. The Ghost of the Ruined
Chateau. |
| 96. The Circus at St. Jim's. | 1330. Chums of the Circus. |
| 97. Jack Blake's Little Dodge. | 1331. Gussy's Star Turn. |
| 102. The St. Jim's Footballers. | 1340. D'Arcy's Dud Eleven. |
| 103. Skimpole the Third. | 1329. Skimpole's Three. |
| 104. Tom Merry's Trial. | 1332. Under Suspicion. |

106. Honour Bright.
 107. The Swell of the Circus.
 110. The St. Jim's Surprise.
 111. Tom Merry's Carnival.
 112. Tom Merry at Monte Carlo.
 115. Glyn's Great Wheeze.
 116. Raiding the Raiders.
 119. The Leader of the New House.
 121. Well Played.
 125. The Jape Against St. Jim's.
 126. The Mystery of the Moat House.
 127. D'Arcy's Bank-Book.
 128. The St. Jim's Regatta.
 134. Lumley-Lumley's Luck.
 137. Lumley-Lumley's Rival.
 138. Lumley-Lumley, Hero.
 139. The Mystery of the Mill.
 140. The Rugger Fourth.
 141. A Shadow in the School.
 142. The New Boy's Secret.
 144. D'Arcy's Disappointment.
 147. Binks the Millionaire.
 148. The Fatal Telegram.
 149. Tom Merry's Fix.
 150. The Search for Tom Merry.
 151. Tom Merry's Resolve.
 152. Tom Merry Against St. Jim's.
 153. Mr. Merry.
 154. Tom Merry's Return to St. Jim's.
 155. No Class.
 157. Fatty Wynn's New Wheeze.
 158. Lumley-Lumley's Return.
 159. Tom Merry v. Jack Blake.
 160. The Faithful Fags.
 161. By Request of the Head.
 162. The Runaway.
 165. Joe's Champion.
 166. The Waif of St. Jim's.
 167. The Rival Schools.
 168. Saints v Grammarians.
 169. The Schoolmaster's Rescue.
 170. For the Head's Sake.
 171. The School Without Masters
 172. Burnt Out.
 173. The Mysterious Document.
 174. Tom Merry's Treasure Island.
 175. The Schoolboy Castaways.
 176. Coronation Day at St. Jim's.
 177. The Fighting Schoolmaster.
 178. The Stowaway of St. Jim's.
 1333. Gussy's Sacrifice.
 1334. The Circus Schoolboy.
 1335. The Mystery Schoolboy.
 1336. Tom Merry & Co. Go Gay.
 1337. The Black Domino.
 1338. The Four-Footed Phantom.
 1355. Falsely Accused.
 1339. Fooled by Figgins.
 1379. Wally's Wily Wheeze.
 1377. The Mechanical Man.
 1341. The Prisoner of the Moat House.
 1342. Rolling in Money.
 1378. Tom Merry & Co's Regatta.
 1369. A Disgrace to St. Jim's.
 1370. The St. Jim's Jockeys.
 1372. Outsider and Hero.
 1373. The Mystery of the Mill.
 1353. St. Jim's in the Scrum.
 1385. A Shadow over St. Jim's.
 1386. The Boy Who Came Back.
 1343. Gussy's Latest Love Affair.
 1344. The Millionaire Boot-boy.
 1345. Up Against It.
 1346. Rallying Round Tom Merry.
 1347. Down on his Luck.
 1348. Gussy the Ghost.
 1349. The Rambler's Recruit.
 1350. The Fags Form-master.
 1351. The Boy from the Underworld.
 1352. Not Wanted at St. Jim's.
 1356. Fatty Wynn's Thin Time.
 1392. The Outsider's Return.
 1393. When Friends Fall Out.
 1394. The Schemer of the School.
 1395. Lumley's Last Chance.
 1361. The Boy Who Ran Away.
 1357. The Fag's Secret.
 1358. The Cracksman's Dupe.
 1359. Rival Riggers.
 1360. What Price Victory.
 1362. The Outsider.
 1380. The Marooned School.
 1381. St. Jim's Without Masters.
 1363. The Fire Reiser.
 1364. The Menace of the Dwarf.
 1365. Hidden Gold.
 1366. The St. Jim's Castaways.
 1321. Jubilee Day at St. Jim's.
 1382. The Fighting Form-master.
 1383. The Secret of Study Six.

243. The Wrong Team.
 244. The Flooded School.
 245. The Schoolboy Scouts.
 246. One Against the School.
 247. Baffled.
 248. Caught Red-Handed.
 249. Hard Times.
 250. Nobody's Study.
 251. Grimes of the Fourth.
 252. One of the Best.
 253. The Captain's Rival.
 255. The Rival Housemasters.
 256. The New Boy's Secret.
 258. Tom Merry's Promise.
 262. The Masked Entertainers.
 263. At Grips with the Grammarians.
 265. Ashamed of his Name.
 266. The Last Hope.
 267. Shoulder to Shoulder.
 268. Hidden Treasure at St. Jim's.
 269. D'Arcy's Dodge.
 270. The Schoolboy Firefighters.
 272. Under a Cloud.
 275. Tom Merry's Discovery.
 276. The St. Jim's Adventurers.
 277. The Strike at St. Jim's.
 278. The Schemer.
 280. The Scamps of the School.
 282. The Rascal of St. Jim's.
 283. Taggle's Benefit.
 284. Schoolboy and Gentleman Boxer.
 285. Misunderstood.
 286. Friends Divided.
 287. Playing to Win.
 289. Wally on the Warpath.
 290. The Message of Mystery.
 291. The Black Sheep.
 292. Fatty Wynn's Hunger-Strike.
 294. Gussy's Guest.
 295. At the Eleventh Hour.
 296. Tom Merry Minor.
 297. A Disgrace to his House.
 298. Straight as a Die.
 299. By Whose Hand.
 300. The Drudge's Chance.
 301. £100 Reward.
 302. The Mystery of the Painted Room
 303. The Schoolboy Raiders.
 304. The Cockney Schoolboy.
1445. The Wrong Team.
 1400. Washed Out.
 1436. Chums on Patrol.
 1437. The Outsider's Darkest Hour.
 1438. The Mystery Man of St. Jim's.
 1439. Mr. "X" Unmasked.
 1447. D'Arcy the 'Tec.
 1452. The Mystery of Nobody's Study.
 1441. Grimes Gets Going.
 1442. One o' the Best.
 1444. The Captain's Rival.
 1453. The Housemaster's Secret.
 1448. The New Boy's Secret.
 1449. Under Suspicion.
 1450. The Masked Trio.
 1451. St. Jim's on the Warpath.
 1455. The Boy with Big Ideas.
 1454. Tom Merry's Last Hope.
 1461. They Faced Dishonour.
 1466. Rivals on the Treasure Trail.
 1456. The Runaway.
 1457. Firefighters of St. Jim's.
 1483. The Mystery of Tom Merry.
 1469. Clue to a Fortune.
 1470. The Treasure of the Santa Maria.
 1486. St. Jim's on Strike.
 1465. St. Jim's Mischief-Maker No.1.
 1458. Getting Even with Ratty.
 1477. For the Honour of St. Jim's.
 1468. Figgy's Grand Circus.
 1471. Tom Merry's Big Fight.
 1478. They Called him a Coward.
 1472. Ginger for Pluck.
 1487. The Traitor.
 1473. Wally on the Warpath.
 1476. The Sign of Three.
 1488. The Black Sheep's Dupe.
 1474. Fatty Wynn's Hunger-Strike.
 1475. The Boy who knew Everything.
 1467. Tom Merry's Great Jape.
 1539. Tom Merry Minor.
 1463. The Boy from the East.
 1494. The Drudge at St. Jim's.
 1499. Gore's Guilty Secret.
 1495. Lynn's Luck.
 1462. The Convict Hunters.
 1504. The Mystery of Eastwood House.
 1505. The Hidden Hand.
 1497. The Schoolboy Raiders.
 1459. A Cockney at St. Jim's.

305. Parted Chums.
306. The Ghost Hunters.
307. Caught Napping.
308. Not Wanted.
309. D'Arcy's Delusion.
311. Earning his Living.
312. Making Things Hum.
313. Rallying Round Figgins.
315. Led Astrey.
316. A Birthday Celebration.
317. The New Captain.
318. Captain Tom Merry.
319. The Housemaster's Peril.
320. Under his Thumb.
321. Desperate Measures.
322. Trouble for Tom.
323. A Dangerous Double.
324. A Change of Identity.
325. Brought to Book.
326. The Shanghaied Schoolboys.
327. Tried and True.
328. D'Arcy the Ventriloquist.
330. The River Patrol.
331. Algy of St. Jim's.
332. Playing a Part.
334. The Toff!
335. Hero and Rascal.
336. The Hidden Hand.
337. The Parting of the Ways.
338. Monty Lowther's Mistake.
339. The Outsider's Choice.
340. Gussy's House-Party.
341. Held by the Enemy.
342. The St. Jim's Carevanners.
343. The Housemaster's Bodyguard.
345. The Fighting Prefect.
346. The Secret Committee.
351. The King's Pardon.
352. Working his Way.
353. Saving Talbot.
354. Tom Merry's War Fund.
355. Captured by Cipher.
356. Keeping it Dark.
358. Talbot's Triumph.
361. The Call of the Past.
362. Cast out from the School.
363. Loyal to the Last.
369. Looking after Mossoc.
371. Master Marie.
372. Levison's Double.
1460. The Cockney Turns up Trumps.
1506. The Ghost of St. Jim's.
1498. The Last Laugh.
1507. The Funk of the Fourth.
1508. Gussy's Latest Love Affair.
1510. Gussy Goes to Work.
1496. Micky Makes Things Hum.
1509. The Swot.
1511. Looking after Lowther.
1493. Jolly Jinks at St. Jim's.
1500. Tom Merry's Triumph.
1501. Captain Tom Merry.
1512. The Housemaster's Peril.
1502. A Bully at the Helm.
1503. Skipper and Schemer.
1481. Tom Merry's Bodyguard.
1524. Tom Merry's Double.
1525. Tom Merry Kidnapped.
1526. He Wanted to be Expelled.
1485. The Shanghaied Schoolboys.
1527. Heir to Millions.
1484. Gussy the Ventriloquist.
1482. The Curlew Patrol Wins Through.
1480. Green as Grass.
1523. The Lure of the Footlights.
1489. The Coming of the Toff.
1490. The Schoolboy Cracksmen.
1491. The Toff's Enemy.
1492. The Toff at the Cross-roads.
1534. Lowther Brings the House Down.
1535. The Boy Who Knew too Much.
1536. Gussy's Unwelcome Guest.
1537. The Stolen Study.
1538. Rival Caravanners.
1522. The Housemaster's Bodyguard.
1513. The Fighting Prefect.
1514. The Secret Society of St. Jim's.
1515. The Return of the Toff.
1516. The Toff's Chance.
1517. A Shadow of the Past.
1520. The St. Jim's Charity Fund.
1518. The Secret of the Cipher.
1519. Standing by their Skipper.
1521. The Toff's Triumph.
1548. The Toff's Dark Hour.
1549. The Boy they Betrayed.
1550. Standing by the Toff.
1551. The Mystery of Mossoc.
1552. The Worst Form at St. Jim's.
1528. The Mystery of Levison.

376. The Path of Dishonour.
 377. For Another's Sake.
 378. The Hero of the Hour.
 379. Grundy of the Shell.
 380. Kildare for St. Jim's.
 381. A Son of Scotland.
 382. A Hero of Wales.
 383. Tom Merry for England.
 390. The Rival Weekly.
 391. A Captured Chum.
 394. The Jew of St. Jim's.
 401. Grundy's Great Game.
 402. Well Played Julian.
 404. Gussy and the Girl.
 405. Skimpole's Windfall.
 406. The Last Hope.
 409. Redfern's Barring-Out.
 412. D'Arcy's Daring.
 413. Grundy the Hypnotist.
 414. The Bounder of St. Jim's.
 415. Barred by the Study.
 417. Trouble for Trimble.
 419. The Study Wreckers.
 421. Manners Minor.
 422. The Right Stuff.
 426. D'Arcy's Debt.
 431. Grundy the Ventriloquist.
 432. In Spite of All.
 435. Skimpole the Sportsman.
 436. Under Gussy's Protection.
 437. A Strange Secret.
 440. Moneybags Minor.
 441. Too Clever by Half.
 443. Grundy the Detective.
 446. Kildare's Enemy.
 449. Friends or Foes?
 450. Levison on the Warpath.
 451. Levison Minor.
 453. By Cousin Ethel's Wish.
 454. On His Honour.
 455. A Surprise for St. Jim's.
 456. D'Arcy in Disgrace.
 460. Herries' Orchestra.
 462. Levison Minor's Luck.
 464. For his Brother's Sake.
 465. Grundy's Guilt.
 466. The Wisdom of Gussy.
 472. Hard Lines for Levison.
 475. Cardew of the Fourth.
 476. A Puzzle for St. Jim's.
 477. Facing the Music.
 1567. The Thief.
 1568. Talbot Takes the Blame.
 1569. The Circus Schoolboy.
 1533. The Tough Guy of the Shell.
 1529. He Wouldn't Sell His Side.
 1531. A Son of Scotland.
 1530. The Way of a Welshman.
 1532. The Bulldog Breed.
 1540. Editor Grundy.
 1541. The Boy Who Spoofed St. Jim's.
 1542. The Jew of St. Jim's.
 1543. The Fool of the School.
 1544. The Silent Witness.
 1553. Gussy in Love Again.
 1545. Skimpole the Benevolent.
 1546. Skimpole Scrape.
 1549. The New House Riot.
 1562. Gussy says "No!"
 1557. Grundy the Hypnotist.
 1558. Trimble the Twister.
 1559. Trimble Tries it On.
 1560. Tom Merry Expelled.
 1561. The Wreckers.
 1563. The Ragging of Reggie.
 1564. Manners Minor Makes Good.
 1565. Big Business Gussy.
 1581. Grundy the Ventriloquist.
 1582. His Black Sheep Brother.
 1578. Skimpole the Sportsman.
 1579. The Funk of the Fourth.
 1580. The Boy who Betrayed Himself.
 1570. Moneybags Minor.
 1575. The Price of Silence.
 1571. He Thought he was a 'Tec.
 1572. The Boy from South Africa.
 1584. Betrayed by his Cousin.
 1573. Levison's Revenge.
 1597. Levison Minor.
 1577. Tom Merry & Co's Dog Show.
 1583. Forbidden to Fight.
 1598. The Rylcombe Recruit.
 1574. They Thought he was a Rotter.
 1576. The Schoolboy Band-Conductor.
 1599. The Toff's Enemy.
 1600. To Save his Brother.
 1601. Sherlock Grundy Esq.
 1602. A Lesson for Levison.
 1603. The Boy with a Bad Name.
 1604. A Cool Customer.
 1605. Cardew Makes Amends.
 1606. Tom Merry's Secret Enemy.

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| 479. Breakers of Bounds. | 1607. Out of Bounds. |
| 480. The Chums of Number Nine. | 1609. The Mystery of Cardew. |
| 484. Looking for Trouble. | 1610. Cardew Comes a Cropper. |
| 499. Walker! | 1613. The St. Jim's Surprise Packet. |
| 504. Clampe's Cousin. | 1614. A Snob's Lesson. |
| 512. The Schemer of the Shell. | 1611. Racke's Vengeance. |
| 513. Tom Merry's Breg. | 1612. Tom Merry's Boast. |
| 518. Manners' Vendetta. | 1615. The Boy from New Zealand. |
| 521. Foes of the School House. | 1616. Manners' Feud. |
| 522. From Foe to Friend. | 1617. From Foe to Friend. |
| 544. The Plunger. | 1618. Gussy's Big Gamble. |
| 546. The Triumph of Tompkins. | 1619. They Called him a Duffer. |
| 562. Called to Order. | 1620. Cardew Cuts Loose. |
| 565. The Misdeeds of Mulvany Minor. | 1621. The Misdeeds of Micky. |
| 595. The Schoolboy Caravanners. | 1588. Where's our Caraven Rested? |
| 596. Rivals of the Road. | 1589. Seven in the Soup. |
| 597. The King's Highway. | 1590. The Rebel Caravaner. |
| 599. Triumble on the Track. | 1591. The Uninvited Caravaner. |
| 600. Foes of the Fifth. | 1592. Ructions on the Road. |
| 601. Looking After Gussy. | 1593. Looking After Gussy. |
| 602. Charley and the Caravanners. | 1594. Charley's Champion. |
| 603. Stranded! | 1595. Stranded. |
| 605. Ructions on the Road. | 1596. Rivals of the Road. |
| 607. The Fag's Honour. | 1622. The Schemer of the Sixth. |
| 626. Glyn's Great Stunt. | 1623. Glyn's Hair-Raising Invention. |
| 668. The St. Jim's Hunger-striker. | 1624. The St. Jim's Hunger-striker. |
| 955. The Mystery Cricketer. | 1585. The Mystery Cricket Coach. |
| 959. Chums under Canvas. | 1586. St. Jim's under Canvas. |
| 960. Honours Even! | 1587. Rival Campers. |
| 980. Trimble Tries it on. | 1566. The Artful Dodger. |

A MYSTERY:

As all Sexton Blake lovers know, Robert Murray wrote the famous Confederation stories, which ran for years in the Union Jack. But did he write the last one - "The Great Round-up"? Those familiar with his style would be prepared to gamble he didn't. It is entirely different to all the others. Moreover, Inspector Coutts, who hitherto had worked side by side with Blake and Tinker and shared all their perils, was never mentioned in that story throughout. Could anyone imagine Murray deprive him of being in at the death?

If for some reason it was necessary to give the job of finishing the Confereration off to someone, why did that substitute commit such a shocking injustice and why did the editor allow it?

Comic Papers in their Heyday

by John Medcraft

If I could use the Time Machine of H. G. Wells and adventure back into the past in search of lost youth I should choose the period of my early boyhood in the heyday of the comic paper. Although nearly half a century has passed since I first met Weary Willie and Tired Tim in the pink pages of "Illustrated Chips", yet the charm of these old papers has never left me. Nor am I alone in this sentiment, for many men who feel no urge to possess or collect other boyhood books have succumbed to the nostalgic longing for a glimpse of their earliest love, the comic papers. Alas, this desire is rarely gratified, for of all our boyhood favourites the comic paper has fared the worst in the march of time.

Between 1895 and 1914 many of these papers were launched by Harmsworths, Pearsons, Trapps Holmes, Henderson and minor publishers, some fell by the wayside but the majority were successful and became established favourites. "The Big Budget" under the regime of Arthur Brooke was one of the very best, a comic paper and boys' journal combined. How we enjoyed the weekly antics of Airy Alf and Bouncing Billy on the front page with Happy Ike and Gloomy Gus leading a host of other comic characters inside before turning to the many fine serials for which the "Big Budget" was famous. There was "The Seven Stars" and other stories of Kenyon Ford by Maxwell Scott; "Galbraith of St. Anselms", one of the many by Henry Farmer; "Through Traitor's Gate" and "Dion the Charioteer" by popular Henry T. Johnson; "Peril Island" and others by Sidney Drew, while Herbert Maxwell, Stacey Blake, Claude Heathcote and Reginald Wray added further lustre to a grand boys' paper.

Another great favourite, "The Jester", commenced its best and longest series in 1901 and was a formidable rival of the "Big Budget" which it closely resembled in format. Of the comic characters, Happy Ike and the Bunsey Boys; Chokey Bill and the Area Sneaker and the rivalry of Cholly and Gewge linger longest in my memory. Amongst many fine serials I recall "Stronghold the Gladiator" and "The King's Highway" by Henry St. John; "Twice Round the Globe" and many more by Sidney Drew; "Sawdust and Spangles" by Claude Heathcote and "Sexton Blake; or, the Clique of Death" by Maxwell Scott. It is a curiosity that so many authors wrote for two rival papers.

"Chips", with the immortal pair Weary Willie and Tired Tim disporting themselves on the front page and the antics of the Casey Court boys on the back, was a universal favourite. Foremost amongst the many gripping serials was "The House on the Heath" by Hubert Trelawney, an engineer turned author. This fantastic story of the deadly rivalry of two super scientists in quest of the elixir of life I have reread many times with considerable enjoyment but, alas, never have I succeeded in recapturing the awesome thrill that held me rigid over the weekly instalments in the far off days of my boyhood. Trelawney wrote several more stories of this type for "Chips", two I remember vividly were "The Man Without a Soul" and "The Death Stone". Later he wrote "The Cruise of the Octopus" in which two rival inventors chase each other around the globe in submarines equipped with all known and many unknown and highly improbable scientific devices. Then

followed by an anonymous writer, "Beyond the Golden Mist" a really fine story of the discovery of part of lost Atlantis in the centre of the Sargasso Sea. Yes, "Chips" was a first class paper.

"Comic Cuts", the first of the Harmsworth comic papers, was similar to "Chips" in format and contents. The comic characters were less settled although none the less enjoyable and I recall Happy Harry and Lucky Lucas; Crusoe and Co., and the Mulberry Flats while Chokey Bill and his friend also appeared for a spell. One serial that impressed itself on my memory was "The House of the Blue Flame" by Hubert Trelawney in his favourite scientific vein. Both "Comic Cuts" and "Chips" contained many serials of the melodramatic type, at random I recall "The House with the Red Blinds", "The Fatal Seven", "The City of Millions", "The Black River", "Madam Bluebeard", "While London Sleeps", "The Vanishing Man" and "999". Stanhope Sprigg wrote several but the majority were anonymous. All were good reading and around 1910 Harmsworths started to reissue them in complete form as "The London Library", but the project petered out and only a few numbers were issued.

"The Comic Home Journal", another old favourite, was started as a companion paper to "Chips" which it closely resembled. After a long run under this title it was renamed "The Butterfly" at the commencement of a new series in 1905 and continued in popularity for many more years. "The Butterfly's" chief funmakers were Jack Robinson and his pint sized submarine, two comic pirates and various damsels more or less in distress. Amongst the serials "The House on the Heath" reappeared with undiminished popularity and I have joyful memories of "Three Lads in a Motor Boat", a boisterously funny serial by a youthful writer probably inspired by Jerome K. Jerome's famous story. The only school story I can recall was "The Boys of the Dandy Fifth".

The publishing firm of Trapps, Holmes and Co. were also actively producing comic papers of which "Lerks", "Funny Cuts" and the "World's Comic" were the most successful and enjoyed long runs, although not approaching the standard of Harmsworth and Pearson. In 1898 they broke fresh ground with the publication of the "Coloured Comic" to which their rivals had no ready answer, but when "Puck" was launched by Harmsworth in 1904 the answer was in every way complete and satisfying. Printed in several colours on the front page and two colours elsewhere, "Puck" was grand value for a penny even in those enviable days when a lot could be bought for a few pence. On the front page the Casey Court boys had pride of place while inside were recorded the deeds of the notorious Billy Smiff and his band of juvenile pirates, the scourge of the Wandle and terror of the local shopkeepers. On the back page throughout the entire run of the paper, the indefatigable Professor Radium strove for the benefit of humanity with numerous weird and wonderful inventions which invariably failed at a critical stage with disastrous results and painful consequences for the professor and others in the vicinity. The attractive format and wealth of comic characters rather overshadowed the stories in "Puck" but they were well up to standard and included "Crusoe Island", "The Sign of the Crimson Cross", "The Secret Submarine" (the "Cruise of the Octopus" reprinted), "Three Chums in a Car" illustrated by Chapman, together with football and cricket reminiscences of famous players.

The four Henderson comic papers were good and if "Scrap" was a trifle more adult than the others that was no detriment. "Nuggets" had a comic section throughout its 15 years' life, but only with the final series was the size and format of an orthodox comic paper adopted. In this form it had a short run but its coloured successor, "Lot-o-fun" was the best of the bunch and lasted to the end of the Henderson regime. "Lot-o-fun's" chief and only outstanding comic character was that loveable vagrant, Dreamy Daniel, drawn by George Davey and featured throughout the entire run of the paper. In my opinion, Dreamy Daniel was one of the three best comic creations in this type of literature, for there is pathos and sentiment mingling with humour in his many ludicrous adventures. For broad humour only I rate Weary Willie and Tired Tim and Professor Radium the equal of Dreamy Daniel. The "Lot-o-fun" serials were first class with our late good friend, R. A. H. Goodyear to the fore with "The Mystery at Mount Oliver", "The Boys of Feathernest" and "Roy Maitland's Schooldays", the latter one of the very best. Derwent Miell, another grand school story writer who gave up authorship all too soon, contributed "The School Vendetta", "The Schoolboy Detectives" and "The Pirate Motor Boat". "Lot-o-fun always had a school serial running and others I recall are "Laleham's Feud", a story founded on fact, and "Out of Bounds" by Horace Phillips. In addition, several of Colonel Prentiss Ingraham's "Buffalo Bill" stories were reprinted. A grand paper, particularly in the early stages. "Comic Life" which started in 1898 was first printed on pink paper but later adopted the bright colours of "Lot-o-fun" which it resembled in format and contents. In addition to its quota of school and other stories several of the A. R. Phillips' historical romances were reprinted from "Young Folks". One of the first serials and the one I remember best was "The Waltham Wobblers" by R. Andom (A. W. Barrett), a really funny story of the misadventures of a boys' cycling club.

"Chuckles" which commenced in January 1914, may be considered the last of the older type of comic papers and should be of special interest to the Hamilton clan on account of the Greyfriars and Courtfield School series by Frank Richards which ran during the first year. Included were stories of Teddy Baxter by Prosper Howard and Ferrars Locke together with reprints of famous old time serials, "Guy Prescott's Trust" by Craven Gower and "The Secret of the Thames" by John Tregellis. On the front page the work of an old "Puck" artist can be recognised in the amusing exploits of Breezy Ben and Dismal Dutchie. "Chuckles" started at an unfortunate time, otherwise it would have had a much longer run.

As I write many half forgotten comic characters crowd my memory; the Highlanders of the Braeside; John James Jimson, an interfering know-all who persisted in advising others with disastrous results (I fancy this character was drawn from life); a burlesque on Ancient Egypt with Tatcho the Seer falling foul of King Radishes weekly and apparently spending the intervening days enjoying the amenities of the Torture Chamber; the exquisite and unfortunate politeness of Gaston and Alphonse; Mr. Hubbubs; the Newleyweds of "Puck"; I could go on and on but time and space forbid.

The joyous double numbers were frequent in the halcyon days before 1914 with all seasons and holidays duly commemorated while birthday and

New Year numbers were not overlooked. A few papers went even further and included outstanding events such as the Varsity Boat Race, the "Big Budget" being particularly lavish in this respect. Best of all was the Christmas Double Number which usually arrived in late November after weeks of preliminary notices. What a feast of seasonable fare it contained, from the snow and holly bedecked title to mistletoe around the Editor's Chat with ghosts, waits, pudding and pantomime and every possible Christmassy aspect in picture and story. With austerly Christmas 1949 on the way I pause and sigh for those I have known in the past. Ah me, those were the days.

ITEM OF INTEREST:

In last year's Annual, we mentioned that Henry T. Johnson's "Pride of the Ring" was published both in Harmsworth papers and Aldine.

There was another instance, for his "Dion, the Charioteer" ran as a serial in Pearsons Big Budget, and was re-published years later in the Aldine Boys Own 3d Library.

JUST TO MAKE YOUR MOUTH WATER:

30 Boys Friend 3d Libraries, 90 Boys Friends, Realms and Heralds; also 800 cigarette cards and album, 35 miscellaneous books. Take 5s.0d for the lot. R.Brackenborough, 9, Victoria Avenue, Margate.

Boys Realms, Boys Heralds, Boys Friends, Plucks, Marvels, Union Jacks, 3s.6d vol. Odd numbers 1s.4d dozen. Arthur Budge, 146, Northgate, Almondbury, Huddersfield.

No use wishing now; they were adverts which appeared in the Boys Herald, "Exchange and Mart", 21st March, 1908.

WANTED URGENTLY: Lot-o-Fun. Nos.1 to 100, published by James Henderson, 1906-8. 5s.0d per number offered for good copies. John Medcraft, 64, Woodlands Road, Ilford, Essex.

WANTED URGENTLY: SCHOOLBOY'S OWN LIBRARY. Any Rookwood and St.Jim's numbers before 168; also one or two others after this number. ALSO any Greyfriars stories prior to number 277 and some after. Numbers of St.Frank's stories to complete set required are 4, 27, 54, 56, 120, 366, and 369. Not interested in any others. Numbers and prices to A.J.Southway, P.O.Box 3, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, SOUTH AFRICA.

Castles, Crackers, and Christmas Cheer

A Review of the Nelson Lee Yuletide Numbers

By J. P. Wood

How well the old-time authors knew the mixture for the ideal Christmas story, a ghostly castle, lots of snow and a number of youthful ghost-hunters with everything coming out all right in the end, the whole thing concluding with the festive board groaning under the weight of the seasonable fare and jollity abounding.

Few authors knew the mixture better than our old friend Edwy Searles Brooks, and throughout the history of the Nelson Lee Library he saw to it that we, his devoted readers, were never left without our seasonable reading for Christmas time.

With the first Christmas number on November 25, 1916 -- I believe there was no official Christmas number in 1915 -- he set the standard for the following years with "A Christmas of Peril" in which all the old favourites, Nelson Lee, Nipper, Professor Zingrave, Eileen Dare and Jim the Penman were featured. Unfortunately I haven't got this copy so I cannot detail the happenings on this occasion, nor do I possess the 1917 number which I presume from the titles would be "The Phantom of Tregellis Castle".

With the St. Frank's stories getting well into their stride, however, Mr. Brooks began to "find his feet" as it were, and the Christmas numbers began to take the shape and strength of plot which we associate with his "golden era".

"The Mystery of Grey Towers" (186 - Dec. 28, 1918) brought the former Boy from Bermondsey to his ancestral home for his first Christmas after he discovered his real identity as the son of Sir Crewford Grey, of Grey Towers, Berkshire. Alighting at Gadsbury station, he drove with his father and Reggie Pitt in a closed brougham through the falling snow to Grey Towers -- a noble looking pile, although not of any great vastness. It was old, very, very old. Before long, mystery was to rear its ugly head, with Sir Crewford and his guests augmented by the later arrival of the stranded Handforth family, Nelson Lee, Nipper and his inseparable chums, being fortunate enough to outwit the plans of the rascally butler Rance and his confederates.

Christmas 1919 (237, Dec. 20) found us at one of Dorrie's palatial country houses - or rather, on this occasion, one which he had rented on the coast of Kent, Cliff Castle. This was a handsome old building perched on the top of a cliff, and Dorrie's sister, Lady Mornington, acted as hostess.

Umlosi, the huge Kutana chieftain, was a member of the party, and some of the boys' sisters were also there. Mystery faces were seen at inaccessible windows almost as soon as the party arrived at the castle. For those who wanted more Brooks, "In Trackless Space" by Robert W. Comrade" was running as a serial, while the current issue of Detective Library

carried a 14,000 word story of Nelson Lee, "The Case of Dr. Man-Ling-Su". The Cliff Castle series was continued over the New Year, with Dorrie staging a mock disappearance, and other odd happenings adding to the spooky atmosphere before the party was able to enjoy its holiday in the appropriate style. (Note: The Prairie Library announced a new Nelson Lee-Huxton Rymer serial).

December 25, 1920 (290) found the cinema-owners of St. Franks on holiday at Tregellis Castle, ancestral home of the Tregellis-Wests, arriving needless to say, in a blizzard. Before long, too, they were involved in the aftermath of the struggle for the right to establish a more popular cinema in Bennington, their rascally opponents, Ryan and Webb, trying to force the hand of Levi's estute father by kidnapping him.

That story was entitled "The Christmas Plot", and imagination was apparently lapsing the following year, for the 1921 number (342 - Dec.24) was called "The Christmas Plotters". Once again the St. Frank's heroes were with Lord Dorrimore, this time at Dorrimore Hall, the ancestral home of the sporting peer. Another, non-too popular a guest, was Dr. Strafford, who was at this time being made the subject of the machinations of Mr. Hugh Trenton and his revolutionary friends in an effort to spread their doctrine of anarchy into one of the country's biggest public schools. Even during the festive season, the Head was not to be free from the terrible trouble which had come upon him, and Trenton struck again before the end of the holiday. And so, the Rebels left to return to St. Frank's to try to occupy the school during the vacation, but the Loyalists were soon on their track and each side occupied one of the two Houses, the whole thing eventually paving the way for the Schoolboy Soviet -- shades of Stalin!

Things were a little more normal in 1922 (394, Dec.23) for we were transported to Somerton Abbey to join the youthful Duke in passing the test which all Dukes had to pass on their 15th birthday. Snow again lent an appropriate seasonable touch as the guests arrived at the noble pile, an enormous place, a great turreted castle with surrounding parks and estates. A former residence of Saxon kings, ancestors of the Somertons.

The following year, (446, Dec.22) "The Schoolboy Santa Claus" saw the St. Frank's juniors unable to start on their holidays because of snowbound trains. So they had to return to the school, but they managed to achieve the Christmas spirit in the Head's house, and helped several of Farmer Holt's labourers' families to spend Christmas in a more joyous atmosphere than had seemed likely. They also managed to lay the school "ghost" who was looking for the legendary monk's treasure.

They were also nearer home the year after (498, Dec.20) for they were the languid Archie's guests at Bennington, Glenthorne Manor, where they again helped to stave off the efforts of a number of crooks to break into the town bank by means of an underground tunnel.

Thanks to a jape that went wrong by Willy Handforth, 1925's Christmas found the St. Frank's juniors in the snows of Derbyshire as Lord Dorrimore's Uninvited Guests at Dorrimore Castle. Here they were able to unravel

the tangled romance of Dorrie's relative Henry Bruce, and Miss Halliday, the new junior mistress at Moor View. This fine yarn took three weeks to reach its happy conclusion to the accompaniment of the familiar snow, fun and games.

This was the last of the small Old Series Christmas numbers, and quite rightly we expected something out of the ordinary from the first of the enlarged Christmas numbers (34, Dec. 25, 1926). On this occasion it was the turn of the irrepressible Handy to be host, and he brought his guests to the Norfolk home of his equally irrepressible Uncle Gregory Bartholomew Handforth, of Handforth Towers, North Walsham. A stately old Norman castle this, with great oak-pannelled rooms, wide fireplaces and oaken rafters -- and a mysterious, lugubrious family retainer and ghost "laid on" for the benefit of the youthful guests. After all, how was Handy to know that a new Towers had been built and that he had been skillfully directed to the wrong one! This story was repeated in the Gem, 1934, after the amalgamation of the two papers.

Violence was more in evidence in 1927 (86, Dec. 24) for the juniors were in the midst of a barring-out and were in possession of the Modern House, complete with ghost, in the middle of the school's most spectacular rebellion against the decision to expel Handy for something which Merrell and Marriott had actually committed. Action was never far from this particular series of stories, and it certainly made for a Christmas out of the ordinary. Thanks to the assistance of Handy's father the usual Christmas festivities were not lacking in full measure.

In view of the popularity of the earlier Esre Quirke series, Christmas 1928 (128, Dec. 22) was very welcome, for it brought that odd character back in another mysterious series of incidents. Central character, apart from Ezra, was Reggie Pitt, who had just found himself the owner of Raithmore Castle, an old rambling, moated pile near Market Downing, a few miles from St. Frank's. There was the real Christmas atmosphere here with furniture moving about without apparent cause, and mysterious figures appearing and vanishing without rhyme or reason.

Eileen Dare made her reappearance the following year (188, Dec. 7) when the efforts to capture little Molly Stapleton involved the St. Frank's juniors in danger at Travis Dene, Suffolk home of the Handforths. A fine old Tudor mansion with stately trees, lawns and private gardens. Molly's enemies captured instead, the guests were able to enjoy the season as in duty bound.

The Phantom of Parkington Grange (2nd New Series 46, Dec. 6, 1930) walked to good purpose for he was able to solve another broken romance, and bring happiness to K. K. Parkington's brother's young and charming wife and her husband.

The time of the Nelson Lee Library was by now drawing to its close, and there were to be only two more Christmas numbers. The first (99, Dec. 12, 1931) related the danger in which Sir James Potts found himself, one Christmas. From Travis Dene to Tregellis Castle, thence to Somerton Abbey and Dorrimore Castle, accompanied always by his trusty friends,

Jimmy journeyed in his efforts to elude the ever-increasing danger presented by his false uncle. A real round-up of all the stately homes of the St. Frank's juniors.

The last Christmas series, 152-154 (1932), had the juniors, as always with the Moor View girls, as the guests of Archie Glenthorne at Forest House in the New Forest. Here the mysterious Nerki the Sorcerer fought hard for a fortune, but Nelson Lee was too much for him, and the youthful guests at last were able to enjoy the hospitality for which they had come to the New Forest.

Your favourite? Maybe it was the following year when the Gem-Lee had the St. Frank's juniors, Dorrie and Umlosi returning to El Dorado to fight the White Giants and the ubiquitous Zingrave. Perhaps it was one of the earlier yarns? But whichever it was, each and all had that artistic wedding of castle, crackers and Christmas cheer to commend it to the happy reader. Happy, happy days, indeed!

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WANTED TO PURCHASE: A Sexton Blake Bust, price to C. Wright, 12, Ashburnham Place, Greenwich, London, S.E.10.

AUTHORS "WHO'S WHO"

ANDREWS, JOHN: A mysterious individual this. He mainly seemed to be concerned in revising popular stories which had been written years earlier. Examples were: "The Silver Dwarf" and "The Missing Heir" made famous by Maxwell Scott, and the trio "Sexton Blake's Schooldays", "Sexton Blake in the Sixth", and "Sexton Blake at Oxford" actually written by Cecil Hayter. To re-publish these stories years after the men whose brains had conceived them were dead, and give the name of the author as John Andrews seemed, well, a little cold-blooded. There were other instances.

On the other hand, "Bodyline Bill the Bowler" looked more like an original story, and may have actually been written by "John Andrews". Also "Bravo! Sergeant Brady" and "The Man with Two Lives".

ARNOLD, CAPTAIN MALCOLM: A splendid writer of sporting stories, often in a military setting. Many of them appeared in the "Boys Realm". It was stated he had a right to his army rank, which wasn't always the case. He certainly knew his subject. "Pride of Kitcheners", "The Rival Athletics", "The Airman Boxer", "Every Inch a Footballer", "From Chopping Black to Champion", and "Bravo! The Gunners".

(I hope readers will not think this page from my schooldays out of place in the "Annual". You see, one night I was passing the end of the street in which my friend Victor lived. I hadn't been that way for years. I turned up the street and paused for a moment before the house in which he had died. Then just by the old school I passed the railings where the incident in my story occurred. Memories came rushing back, so I went home and set it all down. - H.L.)

How my First Collection Started

By Herbert Leckenby

Someone once said I was born with a "blood" in my hand. Like the once reported death of Mark Twain that was an exaggeration, but I shouldn't be surprised if I wended my way to my first day at school with a comic in my pocket, for, with almost all my recollections of those distant days the boys' weeklies played a part.

There was an occasion, for instance, when I could be not more than seven. A girl cousin, several years older than myself, had come to stay at my home for a few days. I was blissfully unaware of the reason, but she was one of my favourite cousins, for at her own home they got quite a number of the comics. One afternoon I was packed off to a friend of my mother's with instructions to return early in the evening. Before I set off, however, I learned my cousin was returning to her own home for an hour or two, so I got her to promise to bring me back some comics.

Back home in the evening she prepared me for bed and as she tucked me in I asked, "Did you bring me those comics?" She replied, with a smile, "Yes," then added, "You've got a new brother." "Oh," commented I, "How many are there?" "Why, one of course," she replied with a laugh. "Pooh, is that all?" I grunted, then settled down to sleep.

Next morning she handed me the comics, five of them. Yes, I remember the exact number to this day. My face beamed; it was more than I expected. "O-oh thanks," I said, "but, here, why did you say last night there was only one?" She looked at me, and then, oh how she laughed, for of course there had been a little misunderstanding, for to me what was a mere addition to the family compared with an anticipated supply of my beloved comics?

I saw that cousin not long ago, now a grey-haired grandmother. I asked her if she remembered that little incident of the long ago. Of course, she didn't; yet it has remained vivid in my memory to this very day.

I recall another happy experience some three years later when a youth, elder brother to a friend of mine, thrust into my arms to my delight a pile of Big Budgets, Chips, Comic Cuts and, oh quite a lot of others. Oh what a wonderful surprise. Problem was where to keep them. I had just found a temporary resting place for them in a store cupboard, when I was urged by my mother to go in search of my brother, whose advent into the world I have just mentioned. Now three years old, he had strayed off somewhere. Snatching up a Comic Cuts, I set off, one eye on the look-out, the other

following the adventures of Chokey Bill and Irea Sneaker. I found the wanderer eventually, and clasping his hand made for home still engrossed in the "comic". Now once again why do I remember that little incident, when for more momentous events in my life which happened long afterwards have been completely forgotten?

However, it wasn't until I was twelve years of age that something happened which brought me what I have always looked upon as the start of my first collection. It was an experience which brought joy to me out of sorrow to someone else - a sweet-faced, gentle lady. One day there came to the school I attended a new boy, a shy, pale-faced delicate looking boy with large spectacles, and with a distressing impediment in his speech. Poor lonely kid! I often had an urge to try and chum up with him, but I was a somewhat bashful, keep in the background sort of boy myself, and I kind of sympathised with him from a distance; sympathised because there were foul little swines who thought it funny to imitate his stammer.

One afternoon going home from school I saw a little ahead Victor (pathetically inappropriate name for such a boy) standing by some railings, and a big lout barring his progress. This fellow was grinning and mimicking the younger boy's speech. Victor's lips were quivering and there were tears in his eyes behind those big glasses. As I have said, there was no Bob Cherry about me. I don't think I ever had a real fight in my life, but at that moment something happened to me. The dormant blood of some long dead ancestor must have stirred in my veins, for instinctively I hit out with a half-bunched fist and caught the tormenter on the nose, drawing blood. I waited anxiously for him to retaliate, but to my surprise, and I must confess relief, he simply muttered, "I was only teasing him," and slunk off, hand clasped to nose. Victor gave me a pitiful little smile, and we walked on together, with maybe my chest sticking out a little more than usual, for the role of protector was something entirely new to me.

From then on Victor and I used often to go to and from school together, and I learned from him that his father, a regular soldier, had been killed in the early days of the Boer War, and that he, an only child, lived alone with his mother. We found, too, we had something in common, a love for reading, with the result that we started swapping our weekly papers. Mine, of course, were Marvels, Boys' Friends, and the like, creased and crumpled through reposing in the pockets of my Norfolk jacket. Victor read the Boys Own Paper and Chums, and they were always so immaculate and vergin clean that I almost feared to handle them. Victor never seemed to make any other friends; he usually was waiting for me at a corner, and I grew to have a great affection for the lonely boy.

Came a day, just before the Christmas holidays, when he wasn't at the corner, neither did he turn up at school, and I later learned to my dismay that he was very ill. Despite our friendship I had never visited his home. I often felt I would like to, but there was a certain reserve about him and I never ventured to suggest it.

The school broke up for the holidays and all Christmas Day Victor was seldom out of my thoughts. The following morning I made for the

street in which I knew he lived. I asked a boy if he knew where Victor Tyler lived. The boy looked at me and said, "Victor Tyler! Did you know him? If you did, didn't you know he died on Christmas Eve? He lived there." He pointed to a house across the way - a house with drawn blinds!

Whether I ever answered the boy I never knew, but as I turned away I heard him say, "Funeral's tomorrow." That was my saddest Boxing Day; all that night I was haunted by the pale, delicate face of the little friend I should never see again.

The following afternoon I watched him set off on his last journey, a pathetic little procession of hearse and a single carriage, in which I caught sight of a lady clad in black. The tears ran down my cheeks and a great lump rose in my throat, for death was something strange and terrifying to me. I felt a little gulpy, too, on making my way to school the first morning after the holidays, with no Victor waiting at the usual corner. In the afternoon, whilst bending over my exercise, I gave a start as the teacher, standing behind me, tapped me on the shoulder. He said, "Victor Tyler's mother wants to see you after school, and you can take a note from me with you."

The moment school was over I set off for Markham Crescent, wondering why Victor's mother wished to see me. In response to my timid knock the door was opened by a sweet-faced lady - in her thirties as I see her now. With a kindly smile she bid me enter; and I handed her the note, which proved to be one of sympathy. She had tea ready and in a minute or two she had made me feel at home. She told me Victor had often mentioned me and said with a sad little smile, "You stood up for him one day when a boy was teasing him, didn't you?"

When tea was over she cleared the things away and then she said, "And now I've something for you." She left the room, returning a moment later with two huge books in her arms. She laid them on the table side by side. I can see them now and that gentle lady standing there though years and years have sped - the Boys' Own Annual for 1900 and the scarlet-clad "Chums" for the following year. Then as though in a dream I heard her say, "Victor asked me to give these to you just before he died, for he said you were the only friend he had at school." I stammered out my thanks and watched her, fascinated, as she thoughtfully wrapped them up separately in brown paper. As she bid me goodbye, I saw her cheeks were wet. Poor, lonely lady!

I made for home, a parcel under each arm. My feelings were mixed, joyful at the thought of my good fortune and the feast of reading in my arms, sorrowful as I realised that they had come to me because a boy had died, leaving a lonely mother to mourn.

At home my late arrival was soon forgiven when I explained the reason, and proudly displayed the gifts. As I have told before, the boys' weeklies were generally frowned upon in my home, but who could object to bound volumes of the B.O.P. and Chums, especially when they were the gifts of a dying boy?

For years they held an honoured place in a book-case until they fell to pieces through constant turning of the pages, by many hands.

Of-t-times as I browse over some papers in my possession my thoughts travel back through the years to that winter's afternoon when I had tea with a sweet-faced lonely lady, and sometimes when I hear in a music-hall, or on the wireless, an alleged entertainer adopting a stammer, I feel an impulse to rise in protest or hurriedly switch off, for I see before me the quivering lips and the tears in the eyes of a sensitive, pale-faced boy who died in the long ago.

ASH, Fenton:

Probably a pen name. Specialised in fantasy stories. His first, "The Radium Seekers" ran in Vol.2 of the "Boys Realm". Others were: "A Trip to Mars", "The Black Opal", "Cadets of the Dolphin", "By Airship to Ophir", and "All for Adventure".

BEESTON, L.J:

A story of his appeared in the first volume of "Chums" 1892, and he continued to write for that paper for a great many years, sometimes using the name Richard Camden. Also wrote for the A.P. papers, two of his stories being "Red Lights and Green", and "The Airship Quest".

Had a vigorous, witty style, but also an audacious habit of serving up the same plot time and time again, with hardly the slightest attempt to give it a new twist. For instance boy possesses marvellous camera - or bicycle, another boy declares he will perform three difficult (and ridiculous) feats. Owner of camera offers it if feats are successfully performed. They were - of course.

BIDSTON, Lester:

(Born 1884). A Liverpool schoolmaster whose work first appeared in the "Champion" and its companion "Pluck". Specialized in "off the trail" fantasy stories. Some of these were "The Radio Planet", "The Wireless Wizard", "The Crimson Claw", and in the declining days of the "Boys Friend", "The Space Destroyer", and "Scound, the Eternal". Was also Paul Hotspur, under which name he wrote "Northward Ho!", "Isles of Gold", and "Treasure of the North".

BOWMAN, Gerald:

Age about 40. Wrote a number of Sexton Blake stories for Detective Weekly, and the S.B. Library. Also yarns for the Thriller and the Ranger. Was in the R.A.F. during the last war and on release wrote a novel "Pattern in Poison Ivy", which was published by Werner Laurie and had many favourable Press notices.

Cardew of the Fourth

By Roger M. Jenkins

"He is not an ordinary fellow, this Ralph Reckness Cardew. Some of his faults are on the surface; his snobbery, for instance, does not really go deep, for the true snob likes fawners and sycophants, and Cardew hates them. But other faults of his are deeper in the grain; no use trying to make a pattern of him! And most of his best qualities want looking for."

Thus wrote J.N.Pentelow for the St. Jims Gallery in Gem No.569, and if anyone knew "Martin Clifford"'s work intimately, it was he. For Ralph Reckness Cardew was most certainly no ordinary fellow: in many respects he was the equivalent of Vernon-Smith at Greyfriars or Lumley-Lumley of earlier years, though of course he had in addition a polished air and suavity befitting the grandson of Lord Reckness; but it did not nevertheless eradicate his unscrupulousness nor did it do more than act as a cloak for his cynical disregard for other people. To his way of thinking, an end justified the means, and here he was similar to Mornington of Rockwood whose disposition perhaps most closely approximates to that of Cardew. But so finely drawn are all Charles Hamilton's characters that even Mornington appears poles apart from Cardew. When Mornington is savage, Cardew is urbane; and where Mornington is nearly always selfish and spiteful, Cardew is only so when he feels he has suffered a wrong. Cardew seldom forgot to keep up the appearance of being a gentleman.

Until the arrival of Cardew in Gem No.475 dated 17/3/17, St. Jim's had been populated essentially by black and white characters; there were no grey ones. On one side of the line were Tom Merry, Blake, and Figgins, and on the other side were Mellish, Recke, and Croke. One knew when to cheer the hero and when to boo the villain because one knew in advance how they would react to the prescribed set of circumstances. It was almost like putting a penny in the slot and seeing the puppets dance. Small wonder then that the advent of such an unpredictable character as Cardew threw a spanner in the works. Tom Merry sank into a decline and never again achieved his former predominance in the saga of St. Jims. The simplicity and charm of the early Gem stories were now to be replaced by more finely drawn characters and more tightly woven plots, and Tom Merry had little to contribute to the new scheme of things. Truly the times were out of joint, and for a while the puppets still tried to dance to the old tunes, but the minuet had perforce to give way to the quick-step. Nevertheless, it was a long time before the juniors at St. Jims became accustomed to the vagaries of Cardew's nature. What was one to make of a new boy who on his first day at school gave his relative D'Arcy such a cool reception and drove away from the station in a car waiting to pick up wounded soldiers from the front? Yet when the wrathful juniors tracked him down they found him chatting to his social inferiors as coolly as a man twice his age. (There was really very little of the snob about Cardew.)

Also on his first day, Cardew had a fight with Cutts, who later tried unsuccessfully to bribe him to keep quiet about it, but the wealthy grandson of Lord Reckness had no need of cash. Still, he did not give Cutts

away, and Mr. Railton accepted his word that he had fought with an undesirable person. Again, Cardew soon came to blows with Redfern, the scholarship junior in the New House whom he had insulted; but he disdained to give his name when he was accused of throwing soot over Mr. Ratcliff, although Redfern and Lawrence were the culprits, and Cardew was flogged. In Gem No.477, however, when he hurled a brick through Farmer Grubb's window and caused that unfortunate old gentleman to think that the Zeppelins were returning, he was expelled. It was only when Redfern and Lawrence owned up to their previous misdemeanor that Cardew's sentence was reduced to that of a flogging.

It is not on record that Cardew often got the better of the imperturbable Monty Lowther. In Gem No.476, Cardew's Cousin Dick arrived. "His clothes were old, seedy, and dirty. His boots were down at heel, his face reddened where it was not dirty, his left eye covered by a black patch. His boots squelched mud as he walked. A frowsy cap was set on the back of his untidy head." It was of course the Humorist of the Shell who had essayed the laudable task of taking down a peg or two this unprecedented new boy. The school appreciated it, though Cardew did not appear to share in the universal merriment.

Cardew shared Study No.9 with Levison and Clive, the South African junior. He fought Clive soon after he arrived, and he enjoyed reminding Levison that before his reformation his behaviour had been as bad as Cardew's was now. In spite of all this, however, the trio pulled together fairly well. Sometimes it might be ordinary good fun of the old vintage, like Gem No.515 - "No. 9 on the Werpeth" - in which they contrived to lock the St. Jims Parliament in the woodshed. Sometimes it would be a more dramatic type of story, like Gem No. 480, "The Chums of Study No.9" - in which they used to slip off to read the war news to a blind ex-serviceman and in which Recke sent Mellish to spy on them and start the rumour that they went to go gambling and smoking.

There was always a certain amount of mystery at St. Jims about Cardew's past. It was known that he had left Wodehouse, another Public School, but if anyone was interested to know the reason for this change his curiosity was made to wait until Gem No.486 in which Lacy, another ex-Wodehousian, arrived at Rylcombe Grammar School, and after a fight with Cardew he was not slow in spreading the news that Cardew had been caught with stolen money in his hand and ordered to leave Wodehouse. Cardew refused either to deny or affirm this report, and the juniors were incensed with his lofty attitude of indifference. They were by no means mollified later when Cardew engineered events so that Grundy was found guilty of theft, Cardew revealing the truth at the last minute to show how easy it was to be falsely accused. In Gem No.488, Cardew saved Gordon Gay from drowning, but he remained the outcast of the school because he still refused to reveal the reason for his leaving Wodehouse. The mystery was cleared up in the following week, however, and Cardew was absolved from blame when it became known that the thief at Wodehouse had confessed, and that Cardew was merely returning the money to the Head's desk from which it had been taken. These four stories form the first noteworthy series about Cardew, and well merited their reprinting in No.14 of the Schoolboys' Own Library.

Another series of stories about Cardew which are not known so well as they deserve were Gems Nos. 692 and 693. The first one, "Chumming with Wildrake", tells how Cardew helped to lead the Canadian junior into bad ways, and the second one, "His Chums Against Him" recounts how the misunderstanding was cleared up after a rather strenuous walking race.

Gems Nos. 726 to 728 formed a more dramatic trio of events. Doris Levison wrote to her brother to say that a Mr. Carson was staying with them at home, who she thinks is planning some sort of revenge upon their father. Carson, anxious to prevent the arrival of Levison at home, comes to the vicinity of the school, but kidnaps Cardew by mistake. The following week Cardew is tracked down, and Levison returns home to find his father ill, but adamant that Carson shall not be arrested. Levison's friends rally round him, and they bring Carson to book in Gem No.728 in which it appears that Mr. Levison's will-power was being sapped by drugs and that Carson was about to murder him for revenge as well as financial gain.

Cardew could play soccer well enough when he chose, but the trouble was that he did not often choose. In Gem No.768 he was selected to play for the junior eleven against the Grammarians, but he did not bother to turn up. His unpopularity disappeared, however, when he made it known that he had induced his grandfather to present a 25 guinea cup to encourage football at St. Jim's. Complications set in when it became known via Trimble's eavesdropping that Cardew had offered the cup to get himself out of an awkward situation without first asking his grandfather, and that Cardew's uncle Lord Lilburn had persuaded Lord Reckness not to put up the money. Cardew went ahead, however, pawning his watch, tiepin, and cufflinks to raise the necessary money and sending his uncle the pawntickets. Just when rumours were circulating and Kildare began to investigate them, Cardew received the cash from his grandfather, and was able to retrieve his possessions in the nick of time. The series, which was reprinted in Schoolboys' Own Library No.168 ended in Gem No.772 with Tom Merry's team, of course, winning the cup.

Cardew's was an extremely perverse nature. Gem No.824 began a series of eight stories in which he was rooted out by Kildare for football practice, disappeared into Monsieur Morny's study for extra tuition in French, and then succeeded in fooling Kildare and Mr. Railton by producing a note from the French Master to exonerate himself. Kildare soon realised that he had been tricked and he enlisted Tom Merry's aid in making Cardew turn up for every practice in future. Cardew then became aware that his old evasion would not work twice, and he began a long and cunning manoeuvre to oust Tom Merry from his captaincy. In other words, if he were compelled to play football he wanted to be captain himself, and captain he became. Even then he still continued his feud with Tom Merry, which culminated in paying a rogue to lie in wait for him with a stick. Cardew's villainy went awry, however, and Levison became the victim of the plot. After this, Cardew seemed to relent; in any event, he soon tired of being captain, and when finally there was a re-election, and it looked as though there would be a tie between Figgins, Cardew, and Merry, Cardew quixotically voted for Merry, thus making his exit as dramatic as had been his entrance.

These stories were reprinted in Nos. 258 and 260 of the Schoolboys' Own Library.

Cardew was as good at cricket as he was at soccer, again when he chose to be. In Gem No. 853, Cardew was picked to play cricket for the junior eleven, but he was desirous of going to the Abbotsford Reces on that particular afternoon and he caused considerable annoyance by declining to play. When, however, he was asked by Aubrey Racke to lose the match so that Racke could win a bet against the school, he decided to play up after all, and helped to win the match to teach Racke a lesson for having attempted to bribe the great Cardew. Racke conspired to get his revenge the following week by keeping Cardew away at the time of the Rookwood match, but the ruse came unstuck at the last minute. This series was aptly entitled "The Boy They Couldn't Trust" when it was reprinted in No. 374 of the Schoolboys' Own Library.

The last - and probably the finest - episode which featured Cardew appeared in Gems Nos. 1006 and 1007, a period in which few St. Jims stories were written by Mr. Hamilton, a fact which therefore makes these stand out more than ever. Here Cardew is blackmailed by a gambler from the "Green Man" who holds an IOU of his, and although Levison succeeds in obtaining the incriminating paper for Cardew he is caught coming back after lights-out and throws it on the fire when about to be searched by the housemaster. Naturally, the Head considers that Levison has concealed evidence against himself, and he is sentenced to be expelled, Cardew being ignorant of the true reason until Levison's brother makes a surmise. When he realises the truth, Cardew owns up to his part of the affair, and Levison remains at St. Jims. Cardew is flogged, but he is dissatisfied, for, as he remarked at the time, it was not to be a proper flogging in the Hall with Pomp and Ceremony but merely a hole and corner affair in the classroom. This excellent pair of stories made a further appearance in Schoolboys' Own No. 338.

So much, then, for Cardew. His advent is a milestone in the History of St. Jims for many reasons; it marked the end of the period during which rival ragging always appeared to be the main theme and the juniors appeared to be too young for their years, during which Life was presented in two aspects - of doing as Tom Merry did or suffer the consequences, and, in short, during which the Gem was essentially a paper for the younger brother. Cardew was a character of such interesting complexities that St. Jims was, for the first time, compensated for not having a Harry Wharton, a Vernon-Smith, or a Billy Bunter. Cardew had succeeded where Bagley Trimble and Alfred Grundy had failed - he brought a new note of realism to the Gem stories by shewing that no-one is wholly good or wholly bad. He was the expression of a new age, the cynical aftermath of the first world-war. Who knows, perhaps his mocking tone in which he referred to the Captain of the Shell as the "Saintly Thomas" was the voice of Charles Hamilton, his creator, alert to perceive the changing mood of the times, and eager to adapt the Gem thereto. Be that as it may, however, a transformation was effected, and effected successfully. There is no doubt that the arrival of Cardew on the scene at St. Jims heralded the Golden Age of the Gem,

those exceptionally fine stories of the nineteen-twenties. There were, alas, many St. Jims tales at this time which were not written by Charles Hamilton, but it is generally agreed that the genuine stories of this period were composed more affectionately than anything else he wrote. As he says, it was as Martin Clifford that he most often thought of himself. His first love was his most constant love, and the character of Cardew was a worthy gift to bestow upon the object of his affection. For Cardew appealed mainly to the elder readers, and it must have been characters principally such as he who retained the interest of readers in the Gem for a longer period than was hitherto normal, since besides being a complex character Cardew was an adult one. Not always understood by the juniors at St. Jims, he was nevertheless appreciated by most readers of the Gem in spite of everything. He was by no means a repellent character; even when we disapprove of his actions we could still feel sympathy towards him. To quote once more from J. N. Pentelow, "Whatever his faults - and there are many of them - Ralph Cardew is a very likeable fellow."



The Education of an Editor

By F. Addington Symonds

Part I

The scene is a scrubby, disused patch of ground at the back of some tatterdemalion houses in one of the shabbiest parts of a Cape Town suburb. The period is the early 1900's and the time is a blazing hot South African summer's day.

A peaky-faced, scruffy little urchin of about nine years of age furtively approaches another and even scrubbier boy and with a conspiratorial air whispers: "Well, have you got 'em?" The other nods, and together they retire to a clump of dusty bushes, where Urchin No. 2 produces from under his shirt a pile of green, pink and yellow papers. With smacking lips and gloating eyes they both settle down to turn the pages of the latest issues of the Ha'penny Marvell, Pluck, and the Union Jack.

"What'll your mother say if she knows?" asks Urchin No. 2.

"I dunno," replies No. 1, wriggling uncomfortably. "What'll your dad do if he finds out?"

"Give me a hiding!" answers No. 2 promptly, and giggles. "But he won't know. We're going to bury these papers as soon as we've finished with them - bury 'em in the sand, so's nobody'll find 'em!"

"I don't see what our parents've got to grumble about," insists Urchin No.1 indignantly. "They're clean, manly papers for healthy boys - the Editor says so, doesn't he? And anyway they're jolly exciting!"

"I think parents are stuffy," says No.2. "Why, they won't even look at the papers to make sure they're not penny dreadfuls. They just say 'Now, you're not to read those awful things' - and snatch 'em away and put 'em in the fire! Just because they've got coloured covers.... Gee! Look at this one - 'Brothers of the Red Robe!' - Cool!"

That, as far as memory serves, is a fairly accurate picture of the first stage in the education of an editor. The said editor-to-be was living at that time with his parents, in distinctly humble circumstances, and in addition to showing deplorable disrespect for their wishes regarding the reading of "penny dreadfuls" was also guilty of some of the most ingeniously contrived excuses for avoiding school (which he hated) and for mixing with other boys of like age and inclinations.

Parents in those days were very strict, compared with 1949 standards. They took such a keen interest in the pettiest details of their children's lives that it amounted - at any rate in the opinion of such children - to deliberate and calculated "snooping"! And they laid down Laws, backed by Dire Threats, which were invariably carried out, to the discomfort and chagrin of their children, who often were unable to sit down for hours afterwards. On the whole, those parents and those laws - and, indeed, the punishments, too! - were sound, sensible and productive of excellent results, if not at the time, then in after life. Urchin No.1

came to recognise this years afterwards; though he never agreed, even after he had grown up and become a parent himself, that his parents were right in forbidding him to read those "penny bloods". So far from doing him harm, they laid the foundations of what was afterwards to become a career full of adventure and profit, and to provide in later years a store of rich and happy memories such as he would not exchange for a wilderness of monkeys, or a palace, or even your next month's sweet ration.

Along with the three papers already mentioned, your young editor-to-be also contrived to get and to read almost every other paper published round about that time. True Blue, for instance; and Dick Turpin; and the Boy's Friend, Realm, and Herald. Even such sidelines as Ally Sloper's Half Holiday; and that once famous and fat compendium for older people, Cassell's Penny Magazine.

But among them all, the prime favourite was the Big Budget; and later on, its companion journal, the Boys' Leader. And thereby hangs many a tale!

Old Mrs. Vincent, of Vincent's Newsagency, High Street, Wynberg, was a kindly if somewhat puritanical soul. And Urchin No.1 knew that if he went along now and then and offered to "sort out" the back numbers that littered the cavernous space underneath her counter, and generally tidy up, she would reward him with a free copy of his beloved "Big Budget", which was a consideration in those days when (in South Africa) it cost 3d and threepenny bits were very hard to come by.

But Mrs. Vincent, though she approved of the B.B., would not have her shop counter soiled with what she called "penny blood-and-thunders" such as the "Ha'penny Marvel", "Pluck", and the "Union Jack". And she was especially strict about banning "True Blue" and "Dick Turpin". So that, when, one lucky day, Urchin No. 1 happened to have "won" a shilling and bought quite a nice little batch of these forbidden papers, he was wily enough to take his kid brother (age 5) along with him to Mrs. Vincent, telling him to stuff the forbidden papers up his shirt and to Wait Outside, See, till he himself returned - with (he hoped and confidently believed) his usual Big Budget, free gratis.

Unfortunately, his idiot brother, growing tired of waiting outside see, wandered into the shop, inch by inch, until, inevitably, he was spotted by Mrs. Vincent, who at once wanted to know why he was walking so strangely - as if he were bow-legged - and anxiously inquired after his health. Her sharp eyes ran over his strangely bulging figure until, in a combination of bewilderment and fright, the kid brother let the tell-tale bundle of bloods slip from beneath his shirt and fall in all their naked guilt upon the floor at her feet.

Mrs. Vincent's surprise and horror were only equalled by her indignation. She snatched the papers up, snatched the free copy of the Big Budget from Urchin No.1, and put the lot on the fire in her back room. "You have deliberately deceived me as well as your poor parents, you wicked boy!" she said, "and you shan't have these papers, nor shall you have the Big Budget again!" And as Urchin No.1 wended his way homeward with fast and

furious steps, dragging his snivelling brother with him, he glared at him and muttered fiercely: "You just wait till I get you in our back yard! You just wait, that's all!"

The scene changed to a small backveld town in the Eastern Transvaal. Our editor-to-be is now nearly 12 years old, and by a process of sheer wearing-down, has somehow persuaded his parents to let him along in the little matter of reading boys' "bloods", so that he now gets them openly (when and where he can). His favourite is still the Big Budget and he has now started writing to the Editor, at faraway, 8 Maiden Lane, Strand, London, W.C., and has even persuaded that editor to send him some lovely big yellow posters, advertising the B.B., which our urchin has promised most solemnly to "put up"!

He begins by nailing one poster to a huge tree in his parents' garden, overlooking the street. And there it stays for precisely 24 hours, when it is angrily torn down by his outraged father and our editor-to-be is put across the parental knee.

But his enthusiasm is only temporarily damped. Another big roll of posters arrives by the next overseas mail and this time he is more adventurous. Choosing a Sunday, and after dusk, he steals forth along the two "main streets" of which the village is composed, armed with the roll of posters, a supply of tacks, a hammer, and - for makeweight - a small pot of paste and an old brush which he has filched from his mother's kitchen....

When he returns home, he has left behind him a trail of black and yellow posters, nailed or plastered to lamp-posts, walls, and even shop-doors and windows. And all of them extolling the virtues of that Great Home Comic and Story Paper, The Big Budget, Out Every Thursday, price One Penny (Three pence to you).

About twenty-four hours later, a diminutive, scraggy scrap of humanity in shirt and trousers might have been seen tearing pell-mell through the main streets and out via the side streets to the open veld - racing at top speed, with a pack of wolves, in the shape of a crowd of infuriated townsmen and shopkeepers, at his heels! They did not catch him - but his father did! And there were no more B.B. posters ever seen again in that village! (N.B. But he did contrive to scratch the words "READ THE BIG BUDGET" on odd walls and hoardings from time to time and so keep his promise to that editor in far away Maiden Lane!)

About six months later he startled the local worthies by announcing the publication of his own weekly paper and had the impudence to solicit subscriptions and even to sell "advertising space". The townspeople, having forgotten all about the youngster's previous misdemeanours (or perhaps because they were intrigued by his sheer audacity) set up and took notice. They also put their hands into their pockets... and he returned from a tour of their shops, offices and private houses, feeling quite rich. In due course the "new journal" made its appearance, having been typed out on odd scraps of paper on a delapidated machine "borrowed" from a too-kindly drill-sergeant at the local Volunteer Headquarters. It was an interesting and highly original publication, consisting chiefly of bits

and pieces pinched from other papers. It "ren" for about three issues... and then one day the kindly drill-sergeant discovered that his remshackle typer had laid down and died. And so once again our hero found himself chased through the main streets and out into the wide open spaces by an irate and disillusioned Good Samaritan! And that was the end of the "new journal" - end of our hero's activities - for quite a long time...

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Part II

Several years have passed. The would-be editor has moved with his parents to Rhodesia and has been put to boarding school. It is a very superior sort of school, for the "sons of gentlemen", run by a strict but sympathetic headmaster who flatters our future editor with a lot of personal attention and invites him to special private meetings in his study where he addresses, from time to time, a select few of the senior pupils on the beauties of English literature.

There is talk of starting a school magazine. The future editor pricks up his ears. He thrusts himself forward. He has, he says, ideas. The proposition is solemnly discussed and finally decided by the powers that be. The magazine is started; it is to be printed by a local printer; and our hero is to be the first editor.

He spends all his spare time collecting material, forcing other boys to write articles on stamp collecting, school sports, and what not. He also writes a whole lot himself, including the first instalment of what he proudly announces as "A Superb New Serial of Mystery and Adventure", entitled The Quest of Atlantis, and introducing "Royston Drake, Statesman, Empire Builder and Leader of Men" - an obvious crib from Graydon Garth of the Big Budget. (He little dreams at this time that this same Royston Drake is, some years later, to be introduced into a real boy's paper, The Champion, edited by himself, from London!)

He finds ample excuse, to his own private delight, for absenting himself from class in order to "run down to the printers", correct proofs, attend to the make-up etc. He is given the most astonishing freedom by the teachers. One day, when the printers sent an urgent note that a whole page needs to be filled, our editor is allowed to stop his class work and attend to the job. He attends to it, right there in the class-room, by inventing a "Kid's Corner" and filling it with the first instalment of a fairy story, ambitiously designed along the lines of Alice in Wonderland, and dashed off while the printer's boy waits.

The magazine duly appears, in a bright green cover and with sixteen pages of solid type. The first page contains a dignified welcome by the Head; the second page has an article by the Editor; the third page is devoted to a splash opening of the "superb" adventure story, with the Editor's name as author. The same name appears again and again throughout the issue. In fact it is almost the only name, most of the other would-be authors having turned out to be a flop.

The magazine is eagerly bought and studied. The Editor waits breathlessly for the verdict, especially for comments on his superb new adventure serial. He is sent for by the Head. "It's a very good effort," says he, "and a great credit to you and to the school. Quite the best thing in it is that little fairy story...." Not a word about the superb new serial; not a word about the score of other brilliant contributions by the Editor. And he's knocked off that fairy story just to fill out a blank page - a scruffy, nondescript little morsel flung to the kids of the junior forms. "Quite the best...!" What about that superb Royston Drake serial?

A week later, the local newspaper comes out with a review, in which Mr. Royston Drake and his author are dismissed in a single acid sentence: "It seems obvious that the young author is an unconscious plagiarist, and that he had been indulging too freely in certain well-known boys' 'Bloods'"!!!

One more issue of the school magazine appeared. Then the printers went bust, the schoolboys fell down on their subscriptions, the advertisers became intensely interested in something else, and the magazine quietly and unobtrusively faded out, unmourned, unhonoured and unsung....

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Part III

Life in Rhodesia - at any rate in those days - was a queer, contrasted affair of sultry epathy and lightning changes. Most of the days were dragged out in sweltering heat and one got the impression that nothing ever happened. Yet, in the next few years, the editor-elect's life was crowded with incident.

He left the school and got a job as a clerk in an auctioneer's office - hours 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Then he met up with a chap who was starting a new weekly journal and got taken on the staff as Dramatic Critic, for no better reason than the fact that he was mad on the stage and had the gift of the gab. Or perhaps the fellow who was starting the paper thought he'd got hold of some cheap labour, since he offered a salary half that of the auctioneer's clerk and then, as often as not, forgot to pay it.

For about a year, your editor worked on that paper, writing long and pompous articles about - of all things - the London Theatre and including in his programme academic discussions on the art of acting. Just about this time, Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion with its Famous Naughty Word appeared, and your Editor wrote a special article which he called "George B--- Shaw", attacked the sage in indignant and wrathful terms.

But his big change came when the town was visited by a touring dramatic company, the first for many years. He was commissioned to do the write-up of their shows and his first criticism contained an attack on the orchestra, which he accused of "churning out unsuitable music in a jerky and inconsequent manner". The next night, at the theatre, he was ambushed, during the interval, in a dark spot at the back of the theatre. The orchestra made a ring round him and the conductor - who happened to be a very fat and shrewish local ledy - demanded an instant apology. He refused -

and had his face soundly slapped! Next morning, he was told at the office that he was not to write any more dramatic or musical criticisms! About a month later, when he turned up one day to work, he found the office deserted. The founder of the paper had decamped with whatever was in the safe, and left the staff - consisting of two other fellows - stranded and without their pay. The paper itself promptly expired.

After that, he decided that he'd better go on the stage. He had about five shillings in the world; but he also had unlimited audacity. He contrived, (by means which he has since completely forgotten, but probably with that famous gift of the gab) to collect a nondescript company, consisting of enthusiastic amateurs, a couple of old professionals, and some other human odds and ends, and wrote and rehearsed a set of one-act plays. He then hired the local theatre - had programmes and posters printed and distributed - and got some of the local bigwigs, including the mayor and the parson, to give the show their "distinguished patronage".

It must be emphasised here that life in Rhodesia in those days was rather happy go lucky. It is very much to be doubted whether anyone could bring off such a bluff, with scarcely a cent in his pocket, nowadays! But the show went on - and surprisingly it was a tremendous success. It paid all expenses and -- thanks to the voluntary and most charitable surrendering of his salary by a very junior member of the back-stage staff - it even provided a profit of ten shillings! On the strength of that, your editor, now regarding himself as a thoroughly professional actor, decided to rig up a tour. And a few weeks later he and his scratch company, complete with posters, handbills, leaflets and what-not, set out by train - on borrowed money - to visit all the neighbouring towns and villeges within an area of some three hundred miles, and to offer them a series of plays, written and produced by himself and what he was pleased to call his "New London Company".

Six weeks later, the tour ended abruptly with the disappearance of the business manager with all the takings. And the company, including your hero, found itself stranded in a dorp (village) a hundred odd miles from the nearest important town.

Time marches on. We next find our hero installed as sub-editor on a local daily in one of Rhodesia's principal towns. He has forsaken the stage and gone back to the pen. If we want to know how he got there, or how he extricated himself and his dramatic company from the mess they had got into, we must reflect on the cheering fact that in Rhodesia all things are possible, provided you have enough guts - or cheek.

By this time, our hero was beginning to get interested, even fascinated, in a certain line drawing of a rather handsome building which had appeared in one of the boys' papers edited by Hamilton Edwards. The building was at that time brand new and H.E. was proudly presenting the picture of it to his readers, telling them that it was the new home of the Companion Journals and was called "The Fleetway House." The address was London E.C.4. - a matter of 7000 miles away. But our hero took no account of time or space. He made a mental note that the Fleetway House was to be his future home. And as he was just then earning barely enough to pay his

lodging, it seems that he was a particularly bright optimist. Nevertheless, he got there. And in precisely five years from the date of that mental note! It seemed a long time to wait; but he was very youthful - only just into his twenties - and time has a way of dragging when one is a young man in a hurry.

How did he get there? How does one get anywhere when one is young and full of flaming faith? Up hill and down dale, in work and out of work, fighting, struggling, scrimping and saving, going hell-for-leather at it and keeping the eye always on the ball. That is not egotism. It is only the ordinary recipe of any really ambitious fellow.

Anyway, there he was - a very junior member of that vast organization, entering the building for the first day of his duties sometime towards the end of 1920. And in the course of the next twelve months he pestered the directors with one idea after another connected with the starting of a new boys' paper - the sort of paper, he insisted, that would take the world by storm. The sort of paper that would "fill a long felt want". Time and again the directors turned him down; but one morning about a year later, he was summoned to the office of the Big White Chief. "Well" said the B.W.C., "You've got what you want. And the title will be---" He broke off and scribbled something on the margin of a newspaper and passed it across. Just two words: THE CHAMPION.

That was where Life really began to Open Up. The announcement by the B.W.C. was made near Christmas and the new paper was to be ready for publication by the latter part of January. Our hero was given a small room on the top floor, furnished with a small desk and a chair - nothing else. He was also allowed the services of an office boy. He was given no instructions beyond being told to "get on with it". It was assumed by the Powers that, having submitted so many ideas and dummies, he must know precisely what to do. What he did know - about the technicalities of the job - was precisely nil. He couldn't even score up a line drawing for the block-makers or compute a page of manuscript for the composing room! But he dared not breathe a word of that. He had to find out for himself - secretly, cunningly, without arousing dire suspicions concerning his own total inadequacy for the job!

The next six weeks passed in a whirl of surreptitious excitement. How he found his way about, let alone gathered together the small army of writers, artists and others who were soon to become famous through the pages of THE CHAMPION, would take too long to tell. It meant working at all hours, even in one's sleep - and somehow he never felt tired!

The great day dawned - January 28, 1922 - when No. 1 of THE CHAMPION appeared on the bookstalls. It passed literally unnoticed by the editor and his staff (one office boy) as they were far too busy preparing No. 5 - work was always a month at least ahead.

Several weeks passed. Then one day he was summoned to the office of the Boss of Bosses, who smiled, offered him a nice armchair and a cigarette, asked after his health, and suddenly said: "How do you account for the phenomenal success of your new paper?" And your editor, quite sincerely, blinked at him and answered, "Is it a success? I didn't know. I've been so busy..."

Success was measured not only in financial returns - which were chiefly the concern of the publishers. It was revealed in a hundred other ways - the sudden, almost startling increase of the editorial staff, from one office boy to ten and later fourteen sub-editors and a lady secretary for the Editor - spelt now with a capital E. It proclaimed itself on the Editor's desk in the shape of more than 200 letters a day from delighted readers. It burst into the office -- or, rather, suite of offices now -- in the shape of excited, enthusiastic authors and artists. It clamoured from half-a-dozen telephones and a dozen clattering typewriters. And it shouted itself hoarse from posters plastered up and down the country announcing THE CHAMPION - THE PAPER WITH THE PERSONAL TOUCH.

But perhaps it spoke most eloquently to the Editor himself when, one by one, he met in person so many of those wonderful people who had been his "heroes" as a boy - the writers and artists who had helped to fill the pages of the dear old Big Budget and whom he had set out to discover, to meet personally and to invite them to bring the old B.B. to life again in The Champion.

And the climax of it all was when the man who made the Big Budget - the man to whom he himself had written as a small boy and with whom he had kept up a correspondence all down the years - opened the door of his office and was invited within to discuss a new serial. That was, indeed, an historic meeting. Without undue egotism, one feels it ought to have been perpetuated by some great artist in the form of an oil painting!!

A. C. Marshall - "Arthur Brooke" - perhaps the greatest of all boys' editors. The man who had packed more thrills into this Editor's life than anyone or anything else at all. The man who had indeed proved to be a real friend to at least one of his countless readers - who, incidentally, performed many an act of great kindness during those ensuing years both to the Editor and his wife. A quiet, courteous gentleman, in the best sense of the word, a man with a heart of gold. May his memory be treasured.

Well, there, for what it is worth, is the story, in brief, of the education of an editor. What followed those early days is largely incidental. The Champion was quickly joined by several others -- Pluck (new series, but actually a new dress for an old paper called Sport and Adventure Young Britain (also new series, but, alas, a dead dog from the start) and The Rocket, an entirely new paper on "different" lines. And of course The Champion Annual.

But actually, there was only one paper - The Champion. Into it was packed all that its editor believed in, all his boyhood dreams, all his ambitions, all his hopes, all his faith. And it attained to a circulation which was reputed to be the highest in the history of boys' journalism. It was more than a success - it was a sensation. And that was due to the amazing enthusiasm and cooperation of writers, artists and staff - a magnificent band of loyalists who worked for the love of the job, and whose loyalty and enthusiasm shone from every page of every one of the 130 issues which were personally controlled by this editor.

During that period of 130 issues, The Champion never once left the editor's personal control. The other papers had to be delegated, but

The Champion remained jealously guarded. Every single word of every Editorial Chat was written by the Editor himself. Every story, every article, every drawing, was chosen and decided upon by him personally. Even on his holidays, he always insisted that proofs should be sent to him. Never for a moment was his hand off the helm. Again, that is not spoken in conceit but only out of sincerity and enthusiasm and a deep and abiding love for the job. The Champion is still running - 27 years afterwards. It is no longer the paper it was; indeed, it is today completely unrecognizable. But it has never ceased publication; and one may perhaps be pardoned for feeling just a little pride in that reflection.

Over against that, there must in honesty be recorded a feeling of deep regret. Boys' papers today are a parody, a caricature of what they once were. Even allowing for inevitable changes in fashion, one feels that there is a grievous gap, a sore need for something as healthy, clean, boisterous, exciting and sane as used to be available to the younger generation in the strangely unreal years before the two world wars. This editor is - and always has been - old-fashioned enough to believe that he owed a responsibility to his readers, that it was up to him to try to give them not only the best in reading matter but the best in human values. Not to preach or teach but to imply, by the nature of the stuff presented, that kind of clean, decent, civilised living which is the raw material of the best in the British character.

Today it all seems so naive and unsophisticated. Today, people smile behind their hands if it is as much as mentioned. But are they, after all, any better off for being deprived of it? Or were their parents and grandparents, perhaps, the luckier in having had so much that was rich in clean, decent reading matter, so much that has become unforgettable, so much that has become for them today a matter of wistful nostalgia, a deep and secret regret for days that have died?

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WANTED: Sexton Blakes, present series, many numbers. F.Osborn, 24, Harpur Street, Bedford.

These WERE the "Bloods"

By Herbert Leckenby

Penny Dreadfuls! Blood and Thunders! 'Penny Bloods! I wonder who coined the phrases. He, or they, probably did so just about a century ago, and their names are lost in the mists of time. Anyway, they started something, for the phrases have passed into the English language, and through succeeding generations applied to every juvenile journal which has found a haven in a schoolboy's pocket.

In the beginning they were terms of condemnation, reproach, the explanation for every crime committed by wayward youth. Of late years they are heard many times and oft, but more often than not they are used good-humouredly, almost in tones of affection, and rightly so, for the real "bloods" died long, long ago.

In all probability the phrases were given to the world through an examination of the publication of Edward Lloyd, the Newsagents' Publishing Company, and others who flourished in the Hungry Forties, publications which glorified the highwayman, the headsmen, the hangman, and pirates of the seven seas, stories with such titles as "The Sea Fiend"; "The Ranger of the Tomb"; "Iven the Terrible", or "The Dark Deeds of Night"; "Dare-Devil Dick", or, "The Boy King of the Smugglers"; "Starlight Nell, Queen of the Highwaymen"; "The Skeleton Crew" or "Wildfire Ned"; "Admiral Tom, King of the Boy Buccaneers" and "The Dance of Death" or "The Hangmen's Plot".

Luscious, blood-curdling, tempting sort of food for the boys of the "Hungry Forties, weren't they?

Well, let us have a glance at the contents of some of them. There was "Varney the Vampyre" or "The Feast of Blood", for instance. It's one of the most famous of the "bloods", but you won't find it lying about in some old bookshop, so it's no use looking. It ran to 220 chapters in this fashion:-

"The figure turns half round and the light falls upon its face. It is perfectly white, perfectly bloodless. The eyes look like polished tin; the lips are drawn back, and the principal feature next to those dreadful eyes is the teeth, projecting like those of some wild animal.... He advances. The girl places one small foot from the bed on the floor. She is unconsciously dragging the clothing with her. The door of the room is in that direction - can she reach it?

"With a sudden rush that could not be foreseen, with a strange howling cry that was enough to waken terror in every breast, the figure seized the long tresses of her hair, and twining them round his bony hands, he held her to the bed... With a plunge he seizes her neck in his fang-like teeth - a gush of blood and a hideous noise follows. The girl has swooned and the vampire is at his hideous repast!"

Yes, Varney the Vampyre was a blood! Another equally famous, if not even more so, was "Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street". Tod Slaughter, of course, made a good and amusing play out of it, but he evidently toned down his script, for turning to page 305 at random we find this.

"Go on, Lupin.

Bury your victim.

But don't think yourself so very safe yet:

It is an old saying that 'Murder will out'.

Do you think that yours will prove the exception?

From a recess in the wall Lupin had dragged a coffin.

It was an old one and rather rotten, so that by the aid of a small crowbar that he had there - what use did Lupin find for a crowbar in the vaults beneath his chapel?

Was it to rip open the coffin and rob even the dead?

Well, well, by the aid of the crowbar he soon forced open the lid of the coffin.

He stood in it then, and stamped down the remains with his feet to make room for the murdered body.

Mrs. Oakley sickened at the awful sight.

She had not quite expected to see such a horror as that.

It appeared to her at the moment to be worse than the murder above stairs.

She felt giddy and faint as she watched the ghoul-like deed.

When he had flattened the nearly decayed body in the coffin as much as he could, he lifted the corpse of his victim from the floor of the vault.

He was, of course, going to tread down the dead body of her he had murdered, in the same way that he had already trodden down the half-decomposed one in the coffin.

Mrs. Oakley heard him treading ——"

No, I think that's enough to prove that Sweeney Todd was hardly a suitable story to read by lamp-light whilst in the house alone.

Grim, fantastic stories still come out of Fleet Street, but hardly one to equal that. And yet, come to think of it, wasn't John George Haigh, of recent sordid memory, reputed to have drunk the blood of his victims, and a certain Neville Heath wasn't exactly gentlemanly in the way he treated his victims.

And now for a change, something to raise a smile, though doubtless the author did not intend it that way. It's part of a chapter from "Three Boy Crusoes" or "Perseverence and Indolence". Nice, sober title, isn't it?

"When George Merridew uttered that cry of horror on finding that either the tree or the rope had given way, for the moment he knew not which, he was near enough to the ledge whereon was the nest he had descended for, to catch it with one hand.

Thus for a second he hung until he could grasp it with the other, while the rope and tree went whirling past, in such close proximity that they nearly hurled him from his hold.

That they had not done so seemed but a brief reprieve from a fate which our hero believed to be inevitable.

His position, in fact, was most perilous.

Above, was some twenty feet of rock, which owing to its slightly overhanging the base, made it impossible to climb, while beneath extended nearly fifty feet of, to George's first glance, clear perpendicular cliff.

Well for him that he had been accustomed to look out from the masthead, or that downward glance at the waves dashing beneath would have upset his brain, causing him to let go his grip.

As it was, his head felt giddy, his heart sick.

Whatever was he to do?

To shout for help would be useless.

Could he raise himself on the ledge?

Impossible.

It was but the merest projection, sufficient to support and protect the nest, out of which the heads of the young birds were craning, while they screamed as if in derision at his peril.

'Certainly the victory's on your side now,' thought George.

'Merciful heaven, aid me! What must I do?'

Again he looked below.

His brain was steadier now.

It did not reel.

Then he thought he'd try a shout.

But as he did so, the sea-birds seemed to shriek louder, and to fly closer, flapping their wings almost in his face.

'It is useless,' muttered the poor young fellow; 'they'd never hear me. Good-bye, dear mother; good-bye, Stella, and the rest. I wonder if Stella will ever know how I got into this strait. I hope she may.'

He thought of the bright pretty girl.

Of how her eyes had brightened on his return, of her pleasure at his delight in the Union Jack she had made for them.

Of what her grief would be when his body was found, if it ever were, at the foot of the rocks.

'And dear good Faith, too.'

Was it that word 'Faith', or Stella's grief, or the thought of the Union Jack, that suddenly seemed to endow our hero with fresh courage?

Certain it is new energy came upon him, and he exclaimed.

'It's all very well to talk of the Union Jack of old England, but when did any British sailor give in without an effort? I, George Merridew, will not be the first to do so, at any rate! Never say die shall be my motto.'

And there we will leave the 'poor young fellow', but I can assure you he got out of his predicament all right, just as did Pearl White in the films of old. "Faith", by the way, had nothing to do with Hope and Charity but was another young lady. Whether she or Stella became his bride I am unable to say, for I haven't got the end of the story.

Stories of highwaymen were, of course, legion in days of yore. They were usually much wronged gentlemen who had been driven from home. One such was "Sixteen-String Jack, the Noble-Hearted Highwayman" as the copy before me has it.

His surname was Rann and in the first chapter we find him denouncing a scoundrel, thus:

"'Villain,' cried Rann, 'oh, miserable villain!' My soul revolts at holding converse with you: but I will strive to control my passion, and finish my task in comparative coolness. Hark ye! In disguise I sought out your wife in the condemned hole at Newgate. I found her there, with her poor innocent babe slumbering in her lap. I saw her anguish, and at a glance I discovered her innocence. I made myself known to her, for she well remembered my parents, heaven rest them! I told her I was prepared to devote myself to her rescue, and drew from her the real facts of the case, which, in pity for you, she had long concealed. She told me that you had drawn Darfield to your house, that you had planned his murder, and that the crime was commuted by Francis Austin, another cousin of the murdered man, and, after your wife, the next heir to the property which had long tempted him to crime. She further told me that she knew you were in league with this wretch to effect a division of the property after her death which you sought to bring about by systematic ill-usage and diabolical cruelties, but that in spite of all, she had determined to die, and thus save you and your brother murderer from the scaffold. I swore to her that she should be saved, but she made me promise not to compromise you. I am prepared to treat with you now. Write a confession of the murder, regardless of the safety of your wife's cousin, and I will deliver to you the papers by which I tempted you here. Refuse, and I will make you a prisoner, and drag you to justice at the risk of my own neck.'

'I will refuse.'

'Tempt me not, I am a desperate man!'

'You are a villain, who would endeavour to frighten me into a confession of a crime committed by my wife.'

'You lie, and you know I speak the truth.'

'I do not know it.'

'Tempt me not, I say, or the scaffold will be your doom.'

'Die, dog!' said Ernest Malvers drawing a pistol from his pocket, and presenting it at Rann's head but fortunately the first missed, and no harm was done.

In a second, Rann was at the throat of his opponent, and grasping him in a vice of iron, he wrested the weapon from him and left him powerless."

Apparently the highwayman with a noble heart had a gift of oratory, too, and one wonders why the villain let it go on so long before "drawing a pistol from his pocket". However, it all helped to spread the story out.

A notorious example of an early blood was "The Wild Boys of London" or "The Children of the Night", notorious because it was said to have been suppressed by the police. As I don't want our "Annual" to suffer a like fate, I'll quote a few of the milder paragraphs, taken from Chapter 98!



"Mat frightened by a Ghost"

"We must now return to Margaret, the envied mistress of the savage burglar, the lovely voluptuous beauty, who charmed almost every beholder, and who had fallen so low as to live with a common burglar.

In spite of the many temptations she had, she had been true to the soulless animal, for he was little better, until she beheld Ralph Montreal.

Ralph, the handsome dashing adventurer, whose dark eyes were filled with passion when he first beheld her.

And in that look he gave the warm blood mounted to her beautiful face, and she felt herself from that moment his slave.

Yes, she loved him with that wild love peculiar to a creature so passionate.

And on that night when he came to employ Michael Savage, that night when the ruffian was from home, Ralph spent the evening in her society.

And when she closed the door upon him, her heart beat wildly at the thought of his return when Michael would be absent, gone to search in Grantham's house for those papers so important to the restoration of a ruined family.

There was something in her heightened colour and sparkling eyes that aroused Michael's suspicion, for when she entered the room he growled,

"What has that dare-devil fellow said to you, Margaret?"

The woman looked straight into his eyes and answered,

"Nothing, why do you ask?"

'Because your cheeks burn and your eyes sparkle.'

'Pshaw, you're jealous.'

'No, Margaret, I am not; were such the case I would—'

'You would what?'

Michael's face became purple and he hissed, 'I would cut your throat as you lay in bed asleep, for none but I shall ever possess you.'

Phew! no wonder great-grandfather got into trouble if he was found with "The Wild Boys of London" in his possession.

The gentle sex would appear to have had a rough time quite often in the pages of the old "bloods". Here's the fair Minnie, for instance, apparently a more virtuous damsel than Margaret. The extract is taken from "Ned Nimble Amongst the Indians" or "The Secret of the Phantom Cave". (Ned was a popular character in the Jack Harkaway era). Minnie had been carried off by one Bill Boaster.

"Boaster drew a breath of relief.

He drew his hand from Minnie's mouth.

'Speak not, breathe not,' he whispered, 'we are surrounded by danger and death.'

'Ned, Ned!' moaned Minnie.

'Fool! silence!' hissed Boaster. 'Would you destroy us both?'

'Wretch!' said Minnie. 'Oh, Heaven! am I still in your power?'

'Girl!' hissed Boaster in her ear. 'I love you to madness, but by Heaven I will kill you if you speak!'

'Kill me - in mercy kill me!' she gasped.

'No, no,' he said quickly. 'I would save you, for I love you. Oh, Minnie, be merciful to me! 'Tis for your sake - yours. I pray you utter no sound.

'Let me go to Ned, let me go!'

'Oh, Heaven, she will bring ruin and death upon us both,' muttered Boaster.

'Ned! Oh Ned, where are you?'

'I must be cruel to save her and myself,' muttered Boaster.

'Minnie, blame me not, blame only yourself for this.'

He thrust one hand over her mouth and with the other tore away a portion of her dress.

Then he thrust her linen between her teeth, and fastening it behind her head, gagged her mouth.

Having gagged Minnie's mouth, Boaster tore another strip from her dress and tied her hands behind her.

"Minnie," he whispered, "You make me cruel where I would be kind: I who love you madly."

Lucky for Minnie ladies were well clothed in those days. However, there we must leave her to be rescued by Ned anon.

Finally we'll turn to "Conrad the Rover", No. 141 of the Boys' Weekly Novelette, one halfpenny. The scene is the state cabin of the "Arrogant", and here are more ladies in distress.

"As Conrad entered this gorgeous stateroom, a handsome, aristocratic matron rose from her seat to receive them, while her daughter, a beautiful girl clung to her bosom, blushing and trembling with fear and embarrassment.

Conrad, in his eagerness to set his fair captives at their ease, by the assurance that with the most delicate respect, had hurried below and entered the stateroom somewhat brusquely.

He recoiled, however, not a little abashed by the haughty and frigid air with which the matron waved him back, but recovering himself, he bowed profoundly.

"A thousand pardons, madam, for this intrusion upon your privacy - he was beginning, when the lady cut him short with chilling disdain.

"Being aware, sir, into whose hands we have fallen, we can be surprised at no act of insult or violence of which we are to be made the victims," she said, in a quivering voice, while the lovely girl in her embrace sobbed as though her heart would break; "but there is at least one resource left us, one means by which we can free ourselves from the control even of the desperate and powerful ruffian who regards us as his prisoners. I shall neither fear nor yet hesitate to use these means if urged to extremity. If you dare to approach one step upon us I will plunge this knife into the heart of my dear child with my own mother hand."

As she spoke she raised a gleaming blade with a look of such fiery determination as to show plainly that she was quite capable of holding to her word.

"Madam, for shame!" said Conrad, the blood mounting to his temples, "Pray do not talk so rashly. Put down the dagger; I would rather wear it in my own heart, than see you clutch it even for a passing moment; with so dreadful, and, I may add, insane a purpose. Doubtless my character has been misrepresented to you, and has been set in the worst light, yet I cannot believe that the most slanderous of my enemies have dared to accuse me of want of respect and consideration for your revered sex. Too many notorious acts of mine tend to disprove that calumny at least."

Lady Mountchensy, for such was the lady's name and title, felt the force of this argument, for Conrad's chivalrous courtesy and gentlemanly treatment of his female prisoners were well known.

The cloud gradually passed from the matron's high and intellectual brow; she even smiled faintly.

'If you pursue the course you have commenced so handsomely, you will deserve our warmest gratitude," said the matron. 'Rosalie, my love,' she added, kissing her daughter, 'give your hand to Captain Marston and return him our mutual thanks for his kindness.'

Conrad raised the little hand and touched it reverently with his lips."

Terrors for talking, these misjudged heroes of old, weren't they?

Well, those are just a few typical examples, blood-thirsty, crude, amusing, illiterate, taken at random from the stories published in placid mid-Victorian days, and which branded "penny dreadfuls", "Blood and thunder" on weekly journals for boys for evermore. But who cares what's in a name?

BRIDGES, T. C.:

(Thomas Charles). Born 1864, died 1944. Also wrote as Christopher Beck. Best remembered for his fine serials about Paddy Leary, three of which appeared in the Boys Realm. "Paddy Leary's Schooldays", "Paddy Leary's Millionaire", and "Paddy Leary's Brother"; also wrote the first story for the 1d Union Jack (1903) "With Pick and Lamp". Worked frequently for adult papers like "Penny Pictorial". Was a friend of David Goodwins (Sidney Gowing). Wrote his autobiography "From Florida to Fleet Street". Judging by letters written not long before his death was one of those friendly, approachable fellows it would have been a pleasure to have at the Old Boys Book Club Meetings.

CHARTERIS, LESLIE:

Born 12th May, 1907, Singapore. Real name, Leslie Charles Bower, the son of a Chinese Surgeon and English mother. Went to America during the war, and applied for citizenship. Not prominently connected with boys' weeklies, but several of his popular "Saint" stories appeared in the "Thriller".

CHESTER, GILBERT:

Best known for his Sexton Blake yarns of which he wrote dozens. Outstanding were his earlier ones in which Gilbert and Eileen Hale, the latter a provocative, heartless, little "baggage". Chester had a crisp style, in the Yankee manner, and was fond of somewhat complicated plots, sometimes tying the loose ends a little untidily. He also had a habit of bringing in Blake about the half-way stage.

Don't forget to complete and return the Voting Paper

Imitation Greyfriars & St. Jim's stories in Magnet & Gem Libraries

By John R. Shaw

(Foreword. - Nearly three years ago a list of the St. Jim's and Greyfriars stories not written by Charles Hamilton was published in our contemporary The Collector's Miscellany. They were compiled after much study by John Shaw, who, it will be cordially agreed, knows more about the stories than anyone. Now, since they were published a great deal has happened. Many old readers of the stories have had the desire to collect and read them again (this to a considerable extent is due to the publication of "Boys Will Be Boys"). Many of these new-comers to our circle were unaware that there were stories not written by the original Martin Clifford, Frank Richards. Frequently during the year I have had a letter saying something like this. "I have been reading Magnet No. --. It has me puzzled. It was not a bit like Frank Richards. The plot was ridiculous and the whole story crudely written. If Frank Richards wrote it I can only say he was completely off form." Well, I have of course had to write and tell the puzzled reader that the simple explanation was that the real Frank Richards did not write it at all. Then followed a request for an explanation.

There's something else too. During the past three years prices have inevitably increased considerably. Devotees are willing to pay the price, but only because of their admiration for the work of Charles Hamilton. Therefore, when they find they have paid 2/6 for a crude imitation written by some obscure "hack", they naturally feel a little sore about it. We therefore decided to republish the lists in the Annual with the addition of a few numbers since discovered by John Shaw.

The circumstances concerning these imitations in the early years of the two papers make in themselves a perplexing and extraordinary story. It may have been necessary for various reasons to use stories by substitutes. In view of the undoubted artistry of Charles Hamilton one would have naturally thought they would have handed the responsibility to some experienced and competent author who could have turned out an adequate story even if he could not capture that elusive touch of the master. Occasionally such a writer did deputise. Edwy Searles Brooks was one, Clive Fenn another, but in the great majority of cases the A.P. seemed content to accept stories from individuals that would have been no credit to an office boy who had been bottom of his form at school.

One such had one solitary idea which he trotted out time and time again - a series of sport events between the schools which he described in the manner of a cub reporter on a fifth-rate country newspaper.

Not only that, for these "temporaries" made all sorts of ridiculous and exasperating mistakes despite the fact that all the St. Jim's and Greyfriars data were available.

Why the A.P. was content to switch from the sublime to the ridiculous, from gold to dross, from a story which was a delight to read one week to one which was sheer trash the next, was to say the least inexplicable.

However, there is hope that some day when the long awaited "Autobiography of Frank Richards" is published, this strange chapter in the history of the two famous papers will be explained. And now I will leave it to John Shaw. - H.L.)

Most collectors of "Magnets" and "Gems" now know that the famous writer of boys' stories Mr. Charles Hamilton originated Greyfriars and St.Jim's and wrote the majority of the stories about both of them.

The "Magnet Library" ran to 1683 numbers: of these Mr. Hamilton wrote approximately 1380.

The total number of "Gems" (including the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. series of the years 1908-08) is 1711. 404 "Gems" (Nos. 1221 to 1624) contain St.Jim's stories reprinted from early "Gems". Of the 1301 original St.Jim's stories printed in the "Gem" Library the genuine Martin Clifford wrote about 780. As the St.Jim's stories in the 404 "Gems" containing reprints were nearly all written by Mr. Hamilton, it means that more than two-thirds of the total numbers of "Gems" contain genuine stories. This is again a very high proportion.

The imitations were printed for reasons known only to the editors, and without the permission of Mr. Hamilton, who strongly objected to the inferior work of hack writers appearing under his pen-names. All are very unsatisfactory as stories of Greyfriars and St.Jim's schools, and only a very few are worth reading for their own sake. The worst of these imitations were printed in both papers during the years 1916 to 1921, and in the "Gem" during 1923 to 1931.

The following lists are the result of many months of study made during the second World War. The writer wishes gratefully to acknowledge some valuable help given him by Mr. Hamilton at that time.

"Magnets" containing imitation Greyfriars stories are as follows:-
85, 87, 99, 116, 165, 260, 287, 313, 317, 321, 347, 349, 351, 353, 361, 377, 385, 388, 390, 394, 405, 411, 414, 417, 421, 424, 426, 427, 430, 432, 436, 440, 448-49, 451, 454, 464, 466, 468, 472, 476-81, 484, 486, 495, 499-500, 506, 509, 512-14, 520, 523-24, 527, 529, 535, 538, 544-45, 549-50, 552, 557, 562, 564-67, 573, 581, 588, 591-92, 594-96, 598-99, 601-11, 616, 618-39, 641-42, 644-48, 650, 652-59, 665-81, 683-88, 690-92, 694-703, 710-14, 716-19, 722, 724-28, 730-36, 740-42, 746-47, 754, 762, 767, 775, 777-78, 780, 785-86, 788, 790-92, 800-05, 813, 815-18, 824-25, 827, 831-33, 835-40, 842, 844-45, 847, 849-53, 856-57, 861, 870-72, 878, 889-92, 894-95, 898, 901-05, 918-22, 932-41, 943-44, 949, 952-55, 972, 974, 980, 991, 993, 1006, 1014, 1030, 1053-55, 1058, 1077, 1083, 1091, 1108-09, 1152-53, 1189, 1220.

These are all the imitations discovered by the writer in the "Magnet Library". (See note at the end of this article.)

There are no imitation St.Jim's stories among those printed in the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. series of "Gems", dated 1907-08. This series of 48 numbers contains only 42 stories of St.Jim's school, as adventure stories, written by four different authors, form the main contents of Nos. 1,2,4,6,8 and 10. These are the only numbers of the "Gem Library" that do not contain stories about the boys of St.Jim's.

The following is a list of the imitation St.Jim's stories printed in the "Gem Library" during the years 1908 to 1931.

Nos. 53, 55, 57, 59, 62, 65, 68, 77, 88, 90, 95, 98, 100, 105, 108-09, 113-14, 118, 120, 122, 125, 128, 131, 133, 135, 137, 143, 146, 156, 164, 256-60, 264, 268, 273, 285, 314, 319, 333, 347, 374, 388, 391, 396, 398, 408, 411, 418, 420, 423, 427, 429, 430, 438, 442, 444, 447-48, 452-53, 458, 463, 470-71, 474, 482-83, 485, 490, 493, 497-98, 500-01, 506-08, 511-12, 515, 517, 519-20, 523, 526-31, 534, 536, 539, 541, 543, 551-52, 554-56, 559-61, 566-570, 575, 580, 583-84, 590-91, 593, 606-07, 606-07, 609-25, 627-656, 664-67, 669-76, 681-82, 684-85, 688, 690-91, 694, 696-97, 702-07, 712, 718-19, 725, 740-41, 752, 775, 785-86, 793-94, 796, 798, 802-03, 806, 809-11, 819-20, 823, 832-35, 840, 843, 848-51, 854, 857, 859-61, 868-70, 872-81, 884-94, 896, 900-05, 910-18, 922, 925-26, 929, 932-34, 937-47, 949-50, 956-69, 975, 977-79, 981-87, 992-99, 1001-05, 1008-13, 1022-30, 1032-33, 1036-68, 1073-1154, 1156-61, 1163-91, 1193-96, 1199-1204, 1206-19.

Among the "Gems" containing reprinted St. Jim's stories there are the following imitations:- Nos. 1304, 1327, 1370, 1377-78, 1448-49, 1478, 1512, 1541, 1577, 1586-87, 1608, 1611, 1622. This concludes the list; but please read the note at the end of this article.

"Gems" Nos. 1625 to 1663 all contain new original stories written by Mr. Hamilton.

The St. Jim's stories in "Gems" Nos. 253 (reprinted in 1444), 254, 255 (reprinted in 1453) and 261 differ in style of writing from the other stories of this period, but they are not imitations. They are stories which were first published in "Pluck" during the years 1906-07, and subsequently re-written by Martin Clifford for the "Gem" Library".

A few stories by Frank Richards and Martin Clifford were printed in the "Boys' Friend 3d. (later 4d.) Library" (First Series). Most of these volumes are genuine stories, but there are four imitations among them. The following are the numbers of all about or connected with Greyfriars or St. Jim's Schools. They are all original stories except where otherwise stated. First the list of those written by Mr. Hamilton:- Nos. 30, 38, 288, 328, 367 (reprint), 383, 509 (reprint), 513 (reprint) and 517 (reprint). The four imitations are Nos. 153, 276, 319 and 489.

NOTE. It is not possible to make these lists of imitations quite complete because the present writer failed to obtain and read eight Magnets (Nos. 282, 339, 382, 400, 404, 455, 720, 721); and still requires eighteen Gems to complete his collection of this paper. However, the authorship of only four Gems (Nos. 16, 74, 81, 99) is in doubt, as the others are either possessed in the form of reprints or have been read. Collectors possessing these numbers may like to read them, and to decide for themselves as to the authorship of the stories.

WANTED: Any bound volumes of Union Jack, years 1906 to 1915. Good prices paid. Leonard Packman, 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.16.

WANTED: Sexton Blake Libraries, 2nd Series, 171 or 723. Leonard Packman, 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.16.

Magnet Masterpieces

Compiled by John W. Geal

(Editor's Note. - Frequently we are asked for information about some particular series of stories which appeared during the long life of the Magnet - the many travels, the famous Bunter Court, Ralph Stacey, Gilbert Tracy and the rest. Well, here's a mine of information about them compiled after much industry by John Geal. We have started from the year 1917, as prior to that the great majority of stories were complete each week.)

1917

501 - 505 THE BARRING-OUT AGAINST JEFFERIES

The new temporary Head ruling with a rod of iron, Mr. Quelch sacked, another master as bad as the Head. The Remove rebel, barring-out in the Remove passage, followed by the Fourth, Shell and Second. Finally the juniors run both masters out of school. Quelch returns, and all's well.

1918

517 to 519 CLAVERING OF THE REMOVE

Redwing comes to Greyfriars in another's place, Skinner & Co. find out, and try to expose him.

521 to 522 CLAVERING, (Cont'd)

Tom gets found out, and has to leave. The real Clavering joins up and leaves for France.

530 to 533 TOM REDWING'S RETURN

Tom wins a Scholarship (put up by Smithy's father) and returns to the fold.

1919

568 to 585 WALLY BUNTER

A very long series this, and running concurrently with the Gem (Gem No. 571-584). Wally, Billy's cousin and double, is bound for St. Jim's. Billy swops with him, Billy going to St. Jim's, Wally to Greyfriars. Although alike in appearance, are in character, poles apart. The surprises in store at both schools make a fine yarn.

613 to 615 VERNON SMITH, "BOUNDER"

A second series with Vernon-Smith's nasty side to the fore, but in the end, sees the error of his ways.

1920

622 to 625 SMITHY IN EXILE

Smithy's father takes him away from school believing him to be wasting his time. He has to prove his worth for one month, by making his own way in the world.

646 to 648 PHYLIS HOWELL AND HER BROTHER ARCHIE

Dealing with the new boy and his sister of Cliff House.

661 to 664 THE GREYFRIARS FILM STARS

Elsie Mainwaring, the film star, is making a school film. The Greyfriars juniors, some seniors and the Cliff House girls, are included, as a genuine background. This takes place at Hawthorne Park on the coast. A love affair between Elsie and Wingete causes trouble, and many exciting twists to a good tale.

1921

704 to 709 HARRY WHARTON & CO ON A CARAVAN TOUR

The chums hire a caravan from Lezerus and on tour are in conflict with Coker & Co. over the ownership of the caravan.

720 to 722 PENFOLD CUTS LOOSE

Pen, in need of money for his ailing dad, starts gambling and breaking bounds with Skinner. However, seeing the error of his ways, he returns to the fold, and the money is raised O.K.

1922

731 to 735 WALLY BUNTER, FORM-MASTER

Wally (aged by 3 years) now 19, returns to Greyfriars as a junior master in charge of the 1st form. (A very mythical form this, now we have it - now we don't!) The series end with Wally firmly established as a form-master??

737 to 739 BILLY BUNTER, RUNAWAY!

Bunter in trouble through an attack on Quelch, bolts from school. The Famous Five are sent after him, and the trail leads via St. Jim's and Rookwood before he is caught.

743 to 745 THE SIXTH-FORM REBELLION

Dr. Locke forced to resign, and Dr. Carneforth is the new head. He is soon unpopular by introducing his new methods. The Sixth rebel, and bar-out in the sixth passage; they are soon joined by some of the Remove. Finally the Governors arrive, Carneforth gets the boot and Dr. Locke is reinstated.

749 - 752 ALGERNON DE-VERE

Algy, formerly named Perkins, the son of a footman, comes into a fortune, comes to Greyfriars and is recognised by "Mauly". Algy acts snobbishly; he goes about in fear that his past will be discovered.

756 to 759 A YACHTING TOUR WITH "MAULY"

Mauly and the Co. on a cruise to France. Mauly's life is threatened for £10,000 ransom, by a mysterious "Gideon Gaunt" who turns out to be Mate aboard the yacht.

768 to 773 HARRY WHARTON & CO. WITH CAPT. CORKRAN IN AFRICA

Capt. Corkran (Bob's cousin) invites the ventriloquist Bunter to Africa, and the Co. to accompany him, to search for buried treasure. The ventriloquist comes in very handy when in the hands of a fierce native tribe. Nugent is a captive, and Bunter becomes king of tribe and rescues Frank. Eventually they all escape and the treasure is discovered.

1923

779, 781 to 784 JIM LEE OF THE REMOVE

Sent to Greyfriars by rascally cousin to help his plan to rob the school, but Lee is as straight as a die and the plot fails.

793 to 799 LEVISON'S RETURN TO GREYFRIARS

Levison Minor, injured at Greyfriars, has to stay at school sanatorium. His brother comes to stay with him until he is well, joining the remove until the brothers can return to St. Jim's. Levison's murky past is constantly raked up by Skinner & Co. However, he proves that his reform is permanent, much to the delight of his chums.

803 to 805 THE WILLESBY TWINS

An obvious hack yarn this. One twin accepted for Greyfriars and his rotter brother rejected. By a trick the bad one succeeds in taking his place, the real twin then takes his turn, etc. in same vein, with subsequent confusion that each creates. Eventually the bad one falls in river Sark. His brother dives to rescue, but both are swept away. Later, one is recovered dead. (Guess which one?) The other rescued O.K.

809 to 812 WITH JIMMY VIVIAN AT PENGARTH, CORNWALL

The Co. spending a holiday at an old mansion (haunted of course) with plenty of excitement, ghosts, smugglers and what have you. But a good tale.

819 to 823 MICK THE GYPSY

Mick, a gypsy in the Greyfriars neighbourhood, saves Sir Hilton-Popper's life. In gratitude he is sent to school; his wild ways cause many upheavals at Greyfriars, and he runs foul of many chaps, including Angel of the Fourth, whom he is very much like. Angel's hatred is very deep; he seeks the aid of his father in his efforts to get rid of Mick, but Mick does Sir Philip Angel a good turn and so he stays. It turns out at last that Mick is Angel's younger brother stolen by gypsies as a boy.

828 to 830 MICK ANGEL'S RETURN (MICK THE GYPSY)

Mick invites the Co. to Scotland for Christmas, at the mysterious house at Lochmuir. A good Christmassy yarn, thick with a Scotch moorland atmosphere.

1924

857 to 860 - SMITHY VERSUS REDWING FEUD

862 to 869 HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN THE SAHARA

874 to 877 THE BUNKING OF BILLY BUNTER

Bunter in trouble again is threatened flogging, in fear of this he hides in the school, finally he is expelled, but remains in the school vicinity. Eventually he asks for forgiveness and returns to school.

1925

879 to 888 HARRY WHARTON - REBEL

Richards at his best in a fine series. Harry falls out with the Co. and goes off for Christmas with Smithy. Getting fed up he returns to the Co. but they will not forgive him. Returning to school, his wayward pride sets him against authority and he rapidly becomes the worst boy in the form. He is sacked from the form captaincy. Mauly gets elected. He eventually resigns, and Bob Cherry becomes the new captain. The feud with the Co. gets worse, finally he gets the sack, and the folly of his ways comes home with full force. The Head intervenes and Harry is allowed to stay. His troubles are gradually ironed out and all is well.

906 - 909 RAGGED DICK

Ragged Dick, a waif or tramp, is taken up by Sir Henry Compton as his heir, and is sent to Greyfriars. Bunter recognises him as Ragged Dick the tramp, and blackmails him in return for his silence. Dick runs foul of his former road acquaintances several times. It is finally established that he is really Sir Henry's nephew, and he leaves the school.

910 to 917 BUNTER COURT

Billy wangles to take a tenancy of one of Lord Combermere's estates through the agent being hurt in an accident by imitating his voice over the 'phone. He then takes a crowd of Removites with him for a holiday at his ancestral home "Bunter Court". He gets deeper and deeper into the swindle. D'Arcy is made a welcome guest as he has plenty of tin. The agent discovers the plot, but Bunter locks him in the cellars, followed later by the butler and D'Arcy. They are found and Bunter bolts. He is hunted far and wide. Mauly eventually squares the monetary side, and Bunter is saved — just.

923 to 931 GERALD LODER, CAPT.

Wingate Minor kicks over the traces and is caught by his brother. Unable to report him George resigns rather than be false to his trusted position. Loder is then elected Capt. He becomes an intolerable bully; and Wingate forces him into a fight, thrashes him, and narrowly escapes expulsion. Loder piles it on, and falls foul of the Remove and comes off second best. Wingate Minor confesses all and the Head announces a new election next term. Loder has one last throw at Wingate during the Xmas vac. But all comes well in the end and the animosity is forgotten.

1926

938 to 940 LINLEY EXPELLED

Ponsonby gets Linley sacked. He returns home to the factory bench. The truth comes out, Mark is cleared, and Pon is expelled.

945 to 948 PEDRILLO OF ZORRO'S CIRCUS

960 to 970 HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN INDIA

Inky's rascally cousin seeking to oust him from the throne of Bawiphur, attempts to kidnap him. It is decided that he must return home immediately. The Co. and Bunter accompany him in an exciting series of plot and counter-plot. The rebel is finally quashed and the lads return.

975 to 979 BOB CHERRY - SWOT!

Maj. Cherry is displeased with Bob's school progress. Bob sets out to improve and swots hard. He upsets the form and they eventually bar him. Things go from bad to worse, but Bob wins through in the end.

982 to 984 COKER AND MR. POYNINGS (his uncle's sec.)

Mr. Poynings tries to persuade Coker not to go to his Aunt Judy's for Christmas as his uncle is very ill. Then he is mysteriously kidnapped. The Co. promised Aunt Judy to help find him. All stay on into the Xmas va. They rescue him and then are invited to Holly House. Eventually it is revealed that Poynings is blackmailing Coker's uncle.

1927

985 to 990 THE GAME KID

Dick Dury, a new boy, better known as "the Game Kid", a young pro. boxer, comes to school. He gives a promise to Quelch not to fight and the subsequent trials and refusals to fight win him the contempt of the ~~form~~ Pally with Hilton, it comes as a severe blow to discover he is a black sheep. He finally thrashes Loder and leaves the school, returning to the Ring.

997 to 1004 PAUL DALLAS

Smithy's father sends Paul to school as his adopted son, the Bounder fearing a rival in affection, hates him from the start, and attempts to drive him from Greyfriars, but he runs foul of the form in doing it. Plot after plot of Smithy's fails at the last moment. Eventually Paul's father turns up and renouncing riches, Paul goes with his father to far off climes.

1007 to 1009 CAPTAIN SPENCER

Smithy, knowing the Head's guest is a Lantham bank robber, sets out to prove it — and does!

1017 to 1026 HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN SOUTHERN SEAS WITH SMITHY AND REDWING

All aboard Mr. Vernon-Smith's yacht, searching for the Isle of Coco, and the treasure of Black Peter. Soames shows his true colours and along with other desperadoes attempts to get the treasure. He fails, however, and the treasure is saved. Tom Redwing's share enables him to pay his school fees, and he returns to Greyfriars.

1028 to 1034 EDGAR BRIGHT AND LEVISON'S RETURN

Redwing returns to school and runs foul of Bright, the new boy, (nicknamed "the Toad"). Bright is there to search for and destroy a will, which would prove that a fortune left to his father really belongs to Mr. Levison. The Levison brothers arrive at Greyfriars (to search for the will). Eventually Ernest Levison finds the will and saves Bright at the same time as he is lying badly injured in the vaults.

1928

1039 to 1041 ERIC GILMORE 2nd FORM MASTER

A convict relation of Gilmore (a temporary master) comes to him for help. He is eventually caught and Mr. Twigg returns.

1043 to 1049 THE "HIGH OAKS" REBELLION

Quelch is dismissed through a malicious trick of Skinner's. The Remove object to his going and rebel in the form room. Then Mauly takes charge and the form marches out of school. Mauly buys a local mansion ("High Oaks") and the boys move in. He controls the rebels very well and in many novel ways. They then get Quelch to take charge and run the form correctly. Col. Wharton then arrives and clears the matter, Quelch is reinstated and the rebels returned.

1050 to 1052 CRUM, SCHOOLBOY HYPNOTIST

1059 to 1067 ARTHUR DA COSTA

Da Costa, a Eurasian from India, is sent by Capt. Markham, a rival for Wharton's fortune, to Greyfriars. His object is to get Harry disgraced and sacked. Harry's honesty and goodfellowship changes Da Costa's resolve, and he renounces Capt. Markham's plot. The Captain himself then tries to accomplish Harry's downfall. However, Da Costa saves Harry from him and all ends O.K.

1069 to 1075 WHIFFLE'S CIRCUS

Bunter becomes boss of the circus by impersonating Mr. Whiffles.

1078 to 1082 CHRISTOPHER CLARENCE CARBOY

The Biggest Practical Joker Ever. A good humorous series.

1087 to 1089 SMITHY AND REDDY IN CONFLICT WITH SOAMES

A Christmas series.

1929

1092 to 1107 HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN HOLLYWOOD

With the chums travelling across America and in conflict with a disgruntled film star.

1118 to 1121 AUGUST HOLIDAY. THE MYSTERY OF THE TRIKE

The chums on a walking tour with a motorised trike as luggage carrier, with a mystery attached to the trike.

1122 to 1125 THE MYSTERY OF RAVENSPUR GRANGE

The Co. still on holiday stay with Nugent's uncle. This series is unique in that Billy Bunter is absent, yet one of the best series of all.

1126 to 1128 JULIAN DELVARNY

A fierce clash between the New Boy and Monty Newland.

1139 to 1150 Xmas. THE COURTFIELD CRACKSMAN

This long series commences at Wharton Lodge, with the Head staying for the holiday. Going on in the new term. (See 1930)

1930

1139 to 1150 THE COURTFIELD CRACKSMAN (see above)

Continued at school with a series of burglaries, and a new mystery master.

1162 to 1165 GANGSTERS AT GREYFRIARS

After Fisher T. Fish to hold him for ransom.

1166 to 1168 POP OF THE CIRCUS

A circus in the vicinity and a circus led is a temporary Removeite.

1169 to 1174 THE REMOVE REBELLION AGAINST MR. BRANDOR

The new temporary Head and his nephew (Otto van Tromp) are a pair of tyrants. The Remove bar out in the Remove passage.

1175 to 1185 August HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN CHINA

Bound for China with Wun Lung who is in danger from the evil Tong of the Red Dragon. One of the best ever travel series.

1191 to 1194 (Xmas) THE MYSTERY OF CAVENDALE ABBEY

A thrilling Christmas tale with a mysterious assailant pursuing Lord Cavendale.

1931

1195 to 1203 "TATTERS" OF THE REMOVE

A waif becomes a Greyfriars boy and follows an exciting tale, with "Tatters" against his rascally cousin and rival to a fortune.

1212 to 1219 DICK LANCASTER, CRACKSMAN AND CRICKETER

A splendid yarn of a new 6th Former. An exciting cricket series.

1228 to 1236 (August) HARRY WHARTON & CO IN AFRICA. WITH SMITHY IN KENYA

In Kenya with Vernon-Smith on business. They are captured and sold into slavery by an enemy of Mr. V.S.

1244 to 1246 (Xmas) CHRISTMAS AT MAULEVERER TOWERS

With Mauly in peril from an assailant within.

1932

1247 to 1254 FLIP OF THE 2nd

A waif sent to Greyfriars runs foul of the new master who is crook acquaintance of his, namely "Jimmy the One".

1255 to 1259 HARRY WHARTON DOWN ON HIS LUCK

Herry, thinking his uncle is against him, starts swotting for a free scholarship to pay his school fees, but runs foul of the form.

1277 to 1284 (August) HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN EGYPT

With Mauly, on the trail of treasure.

1285 to 1296 HARRY WHARTON IN DISGRACE

Here he is up against Loder and Mr. Quelch, becoming the worst boy in the form.

1297 to 1307 (Xmas) JAMES VALENTINE ALIAS "DICK THE PENMAN"

The series starts at Wharton Lodge during Christmas vac. (see 1933)

1933

1297 to 1307 JAMES VALENTINE

The adventures of a boy "Penman" in his efforts to discard his past and make good at Greyfriars. Meanwhile, he is constantly hounded by his former crook pals and the Police. He is eventually reconciled with his uncle and departs for Brazil.

1312 to 1316 BILLY BUNTER'S EASTER CRUISE

Bunter's cousin runs a holiday yacht and offers Billy a free trip if he can fill the boat with Greyfriars chaps.

1330 to 1340 (August) THE GREYFRIARS HIKERS

The Co. Bunter and Mauly on a hiking tour of Southern England with a much sought after "Holiday Annual" containing a clue to the proceeds of a robbery.

1344 to 1348 ALONZO THE GREAT

A hilarious adventure of Alonzo Todd, the weakling in possession of a fluid which gives

1349 to 1353 (Xmas) BILLY BUNTER'S DIAMOND

Christmas at Wharton Lodge with Billy Bunter in possession of a diamond pin bought for 1/-. Actually a stolen gem of great value.

1934

1354 to 1358 BOB CHERRY KIDNAPPED

Krantz, an old boy of Greyfriars, in an effort to obtain secret plans from Major Cherry and capturing Bob for ransom.

1360 to 1373 SMITHY VERSUS SMEDLEY

A splendid tale of Smithy versus his cousin Smedley (a temporary master) in a struggle for his father's fortune.

1374 to 1382 POPPER ISLAND REBELLION

One of the finest rebel series. Bunter sacked, the form believing him innocent stand by him and bar out Popper Island.

1383 to 1389 (August) BUNTER THE BILLIONAIRE

Bunter, by luck acquiring a fortune, takes the Chums on a tour of Europe, pursued by the rightful heir to the money.

1390 to 1399 THE GREYFRIARS SECRET SOCIETY

In the midst of many the best series ever. Prout becomes head and Loder his henchman, becomes an intolerable bully. The juniors form a society to avenge themselves.

1400 to 1403 (Xmas) CHRISTMAS AT HILTON HALL

Christmas, and an escaped convict at large.

1935

1404 to 1412 COKER'S COUSIN, EDGAR CAFFYN

Caffyn comes to the school bent on disgracing Horace and disinherited.

1413 to 1417 PETER HAZELDENE'S UNCLE JAMES

Peter's uncle, a runaway bank cashier, seeks his help, but is finally persuaded to return.

1419 to 1421 JIMMY THE FOX

At Wharton Lodge, with Jimmy, the right hand man of a crook called the Dandy, imprisoned by Ferrars Locke, out to get Jack Drake as retaliation.

1422 to 1433 RALPH STACY

Ralph, a cousin of Wharton's, and exact double, comes to Greyfriars. He is a thorough rotter and uses his likeness to the full. Harry is accused of a number of shady deeds, but comes through O.K. Caffyn eventually leaves in disgrace.

1434 to 1439 (August) PORTERCLIFFE HALL, SUSSEX

Fisby's father takes Portercliffe for the summer and searches for a treasure hoard reputed hidden there. Lord Portercliffe learns of this and stops it. Hiram K. then leaves, Lord P. continues the search and the treasure is discovered.

1440 to 1451 JIM WARREN

Jim booked for Greyfriars, refuses to attend. As his fees are paid, his poor cousin steps in his place. Wharton knew the real Jim years ago and is suspicious. The deception is eventually discovered.

1452 to 1456 CHRISTMAS AT POLPELLEY

With Smithy for Christmas at Polpelly in Devon, with a hidden treasure and ghosts thrown in. An exciting Christmassy story.

1936

1457 to 1460 ERIC WILMOT

Eric is Hacker's nephew and comes from Topham in dubious circumstances. With Hacker looking after him he is dubbed "Form Master's Favourite".

1461 to 1468 HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN BRAZIL

The Co. holiday in Brazil at the invitation of Jim Valentine (see 1497-307 A good series with a diamond discovery and attempted kidnapping for good measure. On return journey meet Putman van Duck. (see serial 1471 on.)

1469 to 1470 HOME AGAIN CONTINUING E. WILMOT

Wilmot is at last cleared and returns to Topham.

1471 to 1478 PUTMAN VAN DUCK

This millionaire's son marked down by gangsters, has a gunman guardian. A ridiculous series this with gangsters right and left. Eventually, the crooks out of harm's way, van Duck returns to America.

1481 to 1490 (August) MUCCONLINI'S CIRCUS

Bunter, terrified of a flogging, runs away and joins the circus. Getting a hold over the proprietor, by discovering he is a spy, Bunter tours Southern England in style. A good circus atmosphere.

1493 to 1497 LODER'S CONVICT COUSIN

The convict on the run comes to Greyfriars as a temporary master. Eventually his innocence proved and cleared of his crime.

1499 to 1509 (Xmas) VALENTINE COMPTON, THE SCHOOLBOY SMUGGLER

Val. smuggles contraband for his uncle. This series goes into Xmas vac. with the crooks aboard Val's yacht. There is a mutiny and they are marooned, rescued by Smithy. Val and his uncle are reformed and Mr. V.S. employs them both on one of his ships.

1937

1510 to 1515 THE TUCKSHOP REBELLION

Quelch and the Head temporarily away. Hacker is Headmaster. The position is too much for him and he becomes a tyrant. The Remove rebel and hold out in tuckshop. Then there are series of attempts to winkle them out. The Head returns, Hacker is sent for a rest, Rebellion over.

1518 to 1521 Highcliffe school in the limelight and inevitably Pon & Co.

1522 to 1525 An attempt on Mr. Vernon-Smith's life.

1528 to 1530 Harry & Co. feuding with Cliffe House.

1533 to 1535 Hazel in trouble and Bob Cherry shielding him and so disgracing himself.

1536 to 1540 ARCHIE POPPER

Wibley sacked for impersonating Mossco. He returns to school as Archie. A good yarn packed with fun.

1541 to 1544 Attempted kidnapping of Won Lung by his rascally uncle in Paris.

1545 to 1554 SKIP THE Ex-PICKPOCKET

Befriended and sent to Greyfriars he has severe time in being accepted into the Remove. Finally, it is established that he is the long lost brother of Miss Bullivent of Cliff House.

1556 to 1559 MY LORD BUNTER

Bunter becomes stand in for Lord Reynham's nephew who is under threat of death.

1561 to 1572 ARTHUR CARTER

Bunter's rascally cousin scheming to get him kicked out of school.

1573 to 1582 HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN TEXAS

With Smithy on his father's ranch in the West, with rustlers etc. and meeting "The Rio Kid".

1585 to 1587 The Co. up against Pon and Loder.

1589 to 1598 (August) HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN THE SOUTH SEAS WITH MAULEVERER

Mauly in search of his cousin. They all have many adventures getting set adrift and landing on a cannibal isle, and Bunter becomes king. Later they meet "Ken King of the Islands".

1899 to 1608 GILBERT TRACY

Gilbert, hating Greyfriars, attempts to get himself kicked out. Also he is up against Quelch. He later reforms.

1609 to 1612 (Xmas) CHRISTMAS AT WHARTON LODGE

With a clue to £1200 which is hidden near Greyfriars.

1939

1615 to 1625 CROCKER, THE OLD BOY BOOT REPAIRER

Crocker getting up business outside Greyfriars causing a sensation. He is also the mystery prowler whose activities cause Ferrers Locke to be called in.

1626 to 1629 EASTER ON BLACKROCK ISLAND

On Smithy's island with Mr. Vernon-Smith being kidnapped.

1631 to 1642 BERTIE VERNON

Smithy's cousin, also his double, at Greyfriars. Like Smithy, an excellent cricketer. They hate the sight of each other. Bertie getting Smithy kidnapped, takes his place.

1643 to 1650 HARRY WHARTON & CO. ON THE THAMES
(The Secret of the Water Lily)

A good series of a holiday adventures, on a camping trip up the Thames, and a mystery aboard.

1651 to 1653 SMITHY VERSUS QUELCH AND WINGATE

1656 to 1668 COKER SACKED

Coker in trouble over fireworks. Price places them in Prout's firegrate. Coker gets the blame and is sacked. He stays in the school vicinity, working for Uncle Clegg as assistant and errand boy. Price admits his guilt and Coker returns.

1660 to 1675 MR. LAMBE

The Co. spend Christmas at Wharton Lodge, Then Mr. Quelch is missing and Ferrers Locke is searching for him. Mr. Lamb goes to Greyfriars to take his place as temporary master. (Cont'd 1940) 1664.

1940

1660 to 1675 (Cont'd, Mr. Lambe) (See above) (1664)

The Bounder gets suspicious of him and Lambe gets him sacked. It finally comes out that Lambe is a notorious crook and kidnapped Quelch.

1676 to 1680 THE MYSTERY OF EASTCLIFFE LODGE

A war story with Soames figuring prominently, with Wibley impersonating Sir William Bird, a secret service agent.

1683 THE SHADOW OF THE SACK

The first of a new series with Harry Wharton in trouble.

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How They Arrived

Part .I

By Robert Blythe

A complete record of all characters connected with
St. Franks before the enlargement of the school in
No.537

One friendly criticism that has often been levelled at the St. Franks stories is that there were far too many new boys, most of them with unusual characteristics, and I must confess that since I've been making notes for this article I am inclined to agree — There were! However, when this subject is gone into, is that so very unusual? The stories were of a Public School, and it would have been an unusual one, had new boys been few and far between. And suppose some did have unusual gifts? Surely that is the very thing that made them interesting. If they had none, there would have been no point in introducing them. At all events, most of them stayed until the end, and at least St. Franks was saved from being a mere transit camp!

Well, let controversy rage, and let me get to my subject! For simplicity, you will find mentioned in this article those characters who arrived before O.S. 537, in other words, during the time that there were only two houses, the Ancient and College Houses. (The latter was changed to the Modern House towards the end of the old Series). I felt that if I dealt with all the boys introduced during the whole run, things would tend to get confused, especially after the introduction of the East and West Houses, and the resultant change around. If therefore your favourite character has been missed it is only because he or she arrived after that date. (That is No.537). So you must have patience and wait for the next Annual, when the second part of this article will appear!!

Before St. Franks came into the picture, two characters, whose names spelt adventure, made their appearance. I am referring to Lord Derriemore and Umlosi, who were introduced to us as old friends of Nelson Lee in No.105, the title of which is self explanatory, i.e. "The Ivory Seekers". Nelson Lee and Nipper were in West Africa when they met Lord Dorriemore in an hotel. Dorriemore persuades the two of them to accompany him in a hunt for ivory. Every year after this, when the summer holidays came round, you would be sure to find Lord Dorriemore inviting a number of Removites to share with him some exciting adventure.

I suppose that the story of how Nelson Lee and Nipper decide to go to St. Franks is too well known for me to go into, but for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the story, here, briefly, is what happened.

During a visit to America on the track of a criminal, Nelson Lee is forced to join a Chinese secret society. — The Fu Chow Tong, to save his life. One of the rules of the Tong is that should he attempt to escape from them, he would be branded a traitor. However, Lee manages to escape and return to England, although not before he had narrowly escaped death on more than one occasion. In England neither he nor Nipper are safe.

And so our much persecuted pair bury themselves at St. Franks college as Mr. Alvington, the Housemaster of the Ancient House, and Nipper in the guise of Dick Bennett of the Remove. Nelson Lee and Nipper first came to St. Frank's and St. Frank's was first introduced to us in O.S. No. 112, and in that story we meet a number of characters, nearly all of whom become well known and remain in the narratives until the end. These include E. O. Handforth and his chums Church and McClure, Tregellis-West and Watson, Fullwood, Gulliver and Bell, Christine, York and Talmadge and Teddy Long, all of the Remove. Morrow is the only senior introduced, although Fenton the school captain is mentioned, but did not make an appearance until later in No. 140. Apart from these well known chaps, No. 112 also introduces seven, and No. 113 eight other characters, but apart from Hubbard, Doyle and Armstrong in No. 113, they were mainly "noises off" and "makers up of numbers".

When Nipper arrived the College House was top dog and the Ancient House was in a very poor state. Fullwood, at this time a complete rascal, was captain of the Ancient House section of the Remove, whilst Bob Christine was Form captain. Of course Nipper soon takes a hand in events, and a fight ensues with Fullwood in which the latter is knocked out, something that nobody else seemed capable of doing, not even the redoubtable Handforth!

Not long after this Nipper becomes captain of the Ancient House juniors and of the Remove, and once more a healthy rivalry springs up between the two houses.

The first new boy after Nipper was an American, Justin B. Farman, (No. 114). Farman, possessed of an easy good nature, at first falls into bad habits by mixing with Fullwood and his crowd. During his first week at the school Farman is kidnapped under mysterious circumstances, but since Nelson Lee and Nipper are on the spot he is soon rescued. Later, a heated argument between him and Nipper breaks out, whilst the latter is attempting to make the former see the error of his ways. Soon after the quarrel, Farman is found unconscious, lying in a road suffering from head wounds. Nipper is accused and is sent to Coventry by the Form, even his friends Tregellis-West and Watson desert him. However, Nelson Lee is still on the track and the real attacker and kidnapper is captured.

Between Farman and the next new-comer we hear of ten others. Of these only Grayson of the 5th (No. 116), Walter Starke and Kenmore of the 6th (No. 117) played any large part in the stories as a whole. Starke, perhaps, is not so well known as the other two, but he was quite as thorough-going a rascal as any. He was instrumental in getting Nipper expelled, in a later story, only to be expelled himself as a result. This was in No. 211.

Cecil De Valerie (O.S. No. 132) came to the school next, and he was a far different chap to the one we know later. In fact, he created something of a sensation. Apart from the fact that he was a rotter (how I dislike that word, but I'm stumped for an alternative!) of the first water, he possessed an ungovernable temper.

Before he actually arrived at the school he had made a very favourable

impression, by rescuing a man from drowning. It was not long, however, before Nipper discovers that the rescue was a put-up job, in order to get the man he had saved into the school. This person was in fact an agent of the Crimson Circle, a criminal organisation led by Prof. Zingrave of the Green Triangle fame, and of course, this meant that De Valerie was also acting upon instructions from the Crimson Circle. The object of the agent in getting into the school was to fix a gadget for the sole purpose of killing a Japanese boy who was due to arrive at the school almost immediately.

Sessue Yakama, the Japanese boy, duly arrived (No.133). He is described as a likeable youngster with a ready smile, who speaks meticulous English, and he was extraordinarily clever at Ju-Jitsu. Owing to the uncovering of the plot his life was saved, other attempts were made but failed. De Valerie receives a flogging for his part in the plot, but having been only a tool in the Circle's agents, the matter was allowed to end there. Later, he gradually comes to realise what a fool he had been, and decides to turn over a new leaf, with the result that he eventually became one of the leading lights of the form. Yakama never played a large part in the stories after this, and was rarely, if ever, mentioned.

In No.137 Tom Burton, otherwise known as the "Bosun", arrived. Tom, a big clumsy lad, son of a retired sea captain, arrives at a most opportune moment, during a flood, and it is not long before his experience with the sea and boats enable him to be the means of rescuing several Removites, whose boat has been staved in. He also saves Nelson Lee from drowning owing to his prowess as a swimmer. His nautical speech soon make him the butt of such fellows as Fullwood and Co., but the Bosun soon puts Fullwood in his place - on his back, thus incurring Fullwood's enmity.

Before the next Removite arrives to grace the scene, we have nine more introductions, some to become well known, others to be just names. Edger Fenton, the school captain, as I mentioned earlier makes an appearance in No.140, but one is not made aware of his immense popularity or of his prowess as football and cricket captain, neither is the firmness of his character made apparent. All this came later. He had all the qualities that go to make a successful school captain, leadership, a cool head in emergencies, strength of character and above all an ability to see the other fellow's point of view. He was mentioned frequently and in one series, at least, played a leading part. This was a series at the end of the 1st New Series.

No. 143 marks the introduction of those rivals of St.Franks, in practical jokes as well as sports, the boys of the River House School. They appeared in the stories frequently until the end. On one occasion they had a story all to themselves. This was in an early Schoolboys' Own.

Cuthbert Chambers and his friends, Phillips and Bryant of the 5th (Bryant, as a matter of fact, was mentioned slightly earlier, in No.138) make their appearance in No.148. Chambers, although possessing an outsize in swollen heads and being an insufferable chump, was fairly decent on the whole, and his generosity was a by-word. As far as I can remember he only once took a leading role in the stories and that was when, owing to his

backwardness in the form, he was relegated to the Remove, where by a freak of chance he is elected Form captain. Even then the authorities feel that he is not making sufficient effort, and in an attempt to buck his ideas up, he is put into the 3rd amongst the fags. This final humiliation does the trick and eventually he gets back into the 5th.

Dallas of the 5th, mentioned in No.149, was and remained only a name. Owen Minor and Cristopher (Juicy) Lemon of the 3rd appear in No's 152 and 154. At that time Owen Minor was captain of the 3rd and ruled the roost until Willy Handforth came along. After that he was mentioned only infrequently.

The next new boy, His Grace the Duke of Somerton, came in No.166, and surely he must have been the most untidy duke in fiction. He was never happy unless he was walking around wearing baggy trousers and crumpled collars, generally ink-splashed, and looking more like a tramp than a member of the nobility. Somerton had left his previous school because he had been sick to death of the snobbishness found there, and his unassuming nature detested the state of being continually fawned upon. That was his lot, simply because he was the Duke of Somerton. On arrival at St. Franks he took the name of Browne in the hope that he would be able to live as an ordinary Removite. His scheme fell through, owing to Fullwood getting to know that a fellow called Brown had been expelled from Somerton's old school, and getting the names mixed, tried to turn the Removites against him. Before the truth came out most of the decent fellows stuck to Somerton, not caring about his supposed past. When the truth was known, Somerton was able to resume his correct identity without fear of snobbery.

I suppose that one of the most popular characters of the "Nelson Lee" was Reggie Pitt. As captain of the West House and one of the leading lights in all school activities, he was one of the best fellows breathing. This was not always so, however. He made his debut in a story called "The Coming of the Serpent" in No.170. The Serpent was the name Pitt earned for himself within a very short time. He soon found himself up against Nipper and Co. His first move against them was to engineer by getting him thrown out of the captaincy. As a result, Handforth is made Form Captain. Arising out of this situation, Pitt is challenged to a fight by Tregellis-West, in which Pitt is beaten to the wide. Pitt there and then decides to get Tregellis-West expelled. This he does by tricking him into visiting a night club where he is found, apparently gambling, by the Headmaster, with the result that he is sacked. This causes such a sensation in the form that, led by Handforth, they decide to go on strike until Tregellis-West is reinstated. Handforth's methods are so nearly successful that Pitt decides that Handforth, too, must go. He manages this by informing the Head that Handforth is preparing to burn down the Gym. Handforth is inveigled into going to the gymnasium where he finds petrol all over the place and wood shavings everywhere. And this is how he is found by the Headmaster. A fake letter telling Dr. Stafford what he is about to do, finally settles the matter and Handforth joins Tregellis-West in exile. Meanwhile things are not going too well for Pitt. Nelson Lee discovers that Pitt is being used by a bunch of crooks to introduce new members to their night club, which is nothing more or less than a

gambling den. They also run a neat little counterfeit money racket as a side-line. Not content with his success in getting Handforth and Tregellis-West expelled, he turns his spite on the Duke of Somerton and Tommy Watson. He played the same trick on them as he had with Tregellis-West. In other words, he tries to get them caught red-handed at gambling. And this is where he comes unstuck, and is finally made to realise how despicable he had been. Somerton's and Watson's visit to this night club coincide with a raid by Nelson Lee and the police. In order to escape, the crooks set fire to the house. Somerton is prevented from entering the building at the last moment by Nipper who knows what is about to happen, but for various reasons Watson is locked in an upper room when Pitt, who was watching, realises what is happening and that Watson is liable to be burnt alive owing to his trickery. He has a change of heart and without giving himself time to think, charges into the burning building in an effort to save Watson's life. He succeeds in this, but he in turn is overcome by the smoke and it is left to Nelson Lee to rescue him. By the time Pitt is fit enough to return to the school he has decided that the game is not worth the candle and resolves to go straight in the future.

This was far from easy for him, and were it not for Jack Grey, who came to the school in No.178, he might have gone to the bad completely. Jack Grey came from Bermondsey, where he had been living most of his life with an aunt and uncle. His name, as he thought then, was Jack Mason. Because of his council school education he had a pretty rough time at the hands of the snobbish section of the Remove, but eventually managed to live it down. Almost from the first, when Grey is put into Pitt's study, they fall foul of each other, mainly owing to Pitt's resentment of Grey's disgust with his cigarette smoking and his escapades after lights-out. Now Grey's uncle, a nasty piece of work called Simon Grell, has discovered that a locket, which Grey has had since he was a child, contains the secret of hidden treasure, but could not get him to part with it, as Jack thought it belonged to his mother and father. Grell uses Pitt to obtain this locket, but Pitt, having stolen it, finds his spite against Grey disappear and his conscience strikes him. To ease his conscience, therefore, he regains the locket before Grell had a chance to make use of it. To cut a long story short, Grell is foiled in the end by Nelson Lee, and it is revealed that Jack Mason is really the son of Sir Crawford Grey. Pitt had done more than his share to bring about this happy ending and by this time his character had completely changed for the better.

Those terrible twins, Nicodemus and Cornelius Trotwood, came along in No.187. Nicodemus, with his remarkable memory and ventriloquism, played a larger part than the deaf Cornelius, but neither were very prominent.

With one exception no fresh faces were seen at the old school for nearly a year. However, there were plenty of other characters introduced into the stories. These included Reynolds, Jesson, and Carlisle of the 6th, Shaw of the 5th, and Ellmore, Simmonds, Holroyd, Munroe, and Augustus Hart of the Remove. The last named presents rather a mystery, because he came to the school, not in a "Nelson Lee" story, but in the "Boys' Realm", somewhere about No. 11 or 12 in 1919. In the "Nelson Lee"

following this date, he was mentioned as though he were an old stager. For some years after this he was mentioned frequently although never as a leading light.

The one exception I mentioned only stayed at the school a few days, but during that time caused more trouble than all the rotters put together. I am referring to Titus Alexis who came in No.221 and was expelled in No.222! Alexis was, as you may have gathered, a Greek! His countrymen may have had a word for him, but the Removites were at a loss! For Alexis had a hatred for the British and of all things connected with Britain. You may well ask why send him to school in England then? Well, there was a reason, but I'm blessed if I can think of one off hand! However, the fact remains that after heaving bricks at all and sundry, and showing other endearing mannerisms, such as trying to ventilate Somerton with a table knife, he was not exactly popular! During his brief stay it seemed that everybody was forming a queue for the express purpose of administering punishment, corporal or otherwise!

That great (in more ways than one) trencherman and expert in things gastronomic, Fattie Little, arrived in No.228, just in time to join the juniors in their barring-out against Mr. Martin. Unlike his famous contemporary Billy Bunter, he was at once a great favourite amongst the fellows although his appetite was something they could never fully understand. A good cook and a decent fellow in every way, he soon took a prominent part in the form's activities. Later he gained renown as the goalkeeper for the West House XI.

A few weeks later in No.236 that tame lunatic Timothy Tucker, together with his "isms" and "ologies", swells the number of the Removites. He doesn't, however, blossom forth until later stories. He played a leading part in the revolt against Dr. Stafford when he saw a chance of putting one of his pet theories into operation, that of a school run on committee lines.

The Hon. Douglas Singleton created a sensation within the first few hours of his arrival in No.240. The sensation was caused by his absolute recklessness in money matters. So much so that he was nicknamed "The Spendthrift". He came to the school with £200,000 in his own right, so perhaps it was not surprising that he was somewhat generous. It was not long before he attracted the attentions of a couple of shady characters who helped him to dispose of more than a few pounds in questionable pursuits, but these amounts were mere chicken feed compared with the colossal amounts handed over by the gullible Singleton to a master confidence man called Phillip Gore. Through various schemes this cheery gentleman, with the help of the other two, relieved the Hon. Douglas of practically every penny he possessed. It is not until then that Singleton realises that he was one of that vast legion which the great Barnum described so elegantly as "suckers"! Once this realisation is forced home to him he does his best to get his own back. He does this most admirably by tricking the three of them into a vault in the monastery ruins where they are eventually collected by the police. In the end, Singleton doesn't fare so badly after all, as he finds that his fortune, instead of being lost for good, is still in the bank in his own name. He owes this remarkable fact to Nelson Lee, who

had been acting in his interests all along, in the character of - surprise! - Phillip Gore!! The whole object of the impersonation being to teach Singleton a much needed lesson, which, needless to say, he takes to heart.

Another eight months elapse before the next new boy appears. This is Dick Goodwin in No.274. Dick was an inventor of no mean ability, for the new cotton loom he had invented, for use in his father's firm, was sufficiently in advance of existing types to attract the nefarious designs of a rival concern. Unfortunately for them, they didn't know Nelson Lee resided at the school, and thereby hangs a tale. All that needs to be said here is that they shared the same fate as most of Nelson Lee's other opponents.

Treading hot on his heels, or at any rate in the next series, in No.285, comes Solomon Levi. Like many of his race, Levi is a keen business man, and owing to the local cinema being put out of bounds and there being no other, he decides to buy through his father an old property called Bannington Grange, with the object of building a cinema. The owner of the vetoed cinema, realising that it is the end of the road for him, does all in his power to prevent the new cinema being built, by organising strikes and all sorts of crookedness. Needless to say, the cinema is a huge success, and the only person not to benefit is Mr. Webb, the erstwhile cinema owner.

About half a dozen minor characters are introduced before the next newcomer, but none played a large part and are hardly worth mentioning. Hussi Rangit Lal Kahn arrived unobtrusively in No.328 and remained so for some considerable time, although more was heard of him during the mysterious occurrences concerning his brother Goolah Kahn later on.

John Martin, who came next in No.349, was unusual, inasmuch as apart from having lost his memory when we first meet him, the author himself suffered from loss of memory concerning him, as after this story until in the column "Between Ourselves" some years later, Mr. Brooks confesses that he had forgotten all about him! Anyway, John Martin is befriended by the Headmaster, and is given a place in the school mainly because he manages to save the Head's life. It is eventually established that he was the only son of the late John Willard, of Willards Island fame.

Two other chaps arrive during this series. One of these (apart from Handforth) was destined to be the most popular character of the whole lot, and that was the one and only Archibald Winston Derek Glenthorne. The other was his complete opposite. I suppose that Enoch Snipe (who came at the same time as John Willard) must have been the most obnoxious schoolboy in fiction. He would have made a worthy son of Uriah Heep. With his cringing, slimy ways, he was soon utterly detested by everybody, including Fullwood & Co. who were not usually so particular. It was not for nothing that he was promptly nicknamed "The Worm". He was never featured much after this series, but there is at least one story in which he gets the limelight. That is in No.8, 1st New Series, where Handforth is blamed for something done by Snipe and gets the sack. (Incidentally, this story was reprinted in No.19 of the 3rd New Series).

Archie Glenthorne came in No.352 and he proved to be one of the cheeriest and most humorous characters one could wish to meet. Archie was

one of the few introduced before any thought of St. Franks entered his head. He first made acquaintance of the Removites owing to the latter wishing to obtain an option on Willards Island, the property being on Colonel Glenthorne's estate. Glenthorne takes an interest in the matter and gets to like the Removites so well that he decides to persuade his father to send him to St. Franks. Arriving there, he joins in the hunt for treasure buried on Willards Island, on behalf of John Willard, whose father, it was known, had placed it there. Of course there is a gang of crooks (there usually was with buried treasure about) and Enoch Snipe is their helper.

A few weeks later in No.360 we meet, for the first time, a Chinese boy, Yung Ching, and before very long he is kidnapped by a gent named Fu Chow, who had some differences of opinion with Yung Ching's father, old Ching (I forget what his real name was!) Poor old Ching - sorry! Yung Ching is finally carted off on a slow boat to China where murky happenings are in store for him. This gives the Removites the opportunity for a grand holiday in the South Seas, apart from discovering a lost country in Antartica called New Anglia, where there was an English colony living the life of their ancestors of Plantagenet days.

That boat I mentioned must have been a slow one, because Lord Dorrie- : more's rescue party caught up with it in Egypt! Ching is rescued, of course, and the villains are foiled.

After the holiday party returns, one of the first things that happened was that Handforth's peace of mind is sadly disturbed. In other words, his young brother Willy joins the Third (No.386). Imagine Willy Handforth, the terror of the Third, dressed in a blue sailor suit, complete with lace trimmings! That is how he presents himself, much to the consternation of Edward Oswald. The Third, of course, proceed to put Willy through the mill, but unfortunately for them, it is they who get the worst of it. From that moment the Third lose their peace of mine; for Willy proceeds to rule the roost with an iron fist. In fact, Willy becomes a dictator. Owen Minor is ousted from his job as Form captain, and Willy takes over. However, in spite of all this, he does more for his form than any previous captain. Eventually, realising that they have a leader worthy of the name, they back him up in everything, becoming united for the first time.

Larry Scott, a boy who found it impossible to tell a lie (a most awkward type to have about the place) came in No.393, but made only infrequent appearances.

Alf Brent, who arrived in No.408, was a boy with a conviction. That most Public Schoolboys were snobs. Although his father was Sir John Brent, the Chairman of the Board of Governors, he decided to come to the school in the guise of an ordinary working-class lad, whose father was a bricklayer. For this purpose he adopts the name of Alf Huggins. In attempting to prove his point he let himself in for a pile of trouble. Fullwood and his set immediately do their best to get him thrown out by making most of the Removites antagonistic towards him. When his supposed father comes to visit him, the resentment of the majority reached fever pitch and a disgraceful scene ensues, in which the unfortunate bricklayer is literally

thrown out of the school. The better element, led by Nipper and Handforth, are disgusted with their fellow Removites, and try to stop the persecution, but to no avail. It is Archie Glenthorpe, aristocrat though he was, who befriends Brent and helps him to stand up to the bitter feeling aroused. Fullwood, by faking evidence eventually gets him expelled, but before he goes, the tables are turned with a vengeance. The North Tower was struck by lightning, and Fullwood was trapped by falling masonry, with the building about to collapse. Brent, without thought for himself, goes to the rescue. Fullwood is saved, but Brent is knocked unconscious by collapsing brickwork. He suffers concussion and his life is in danger, although later it is saved by an emergency operation. The Remove, now thoroughly ashamed of itself, try to make amends and Fullwood confesses, thus enabling Brent to be reinstated. Finally, by the time Sir John Brent announces that the boy they had thought to be a bricklayer's son is his own, they have come to accept him as one of themselves.

That lanky oddity, Clarence Fellowes, is met by the Removites whilst they are on a caravan holiday (No.416). Fellowes was a poet and was peculiar inasmuch as his speech is one long stream of poetry, of sorts. He cannot make the most prosaic statement without turning it into a rhyme. As he is bound for St. Franks the next term, he joined the caravanners and shared their adventures.

One of the most forceful and energetic types ever to take the school by storm was Busterfield Boots, who together with his five henchmen, Horace Crowe, George Webb, Albert Crookes, Walter Denny, and Percy Bray, came from Kendis College to St. Franks in No.432. At the time of their arrival all the leading lights of the Remove are on holiday in America. By the time they get back to the school they find Boots & Co. in possession of the College House. To their consternation they find that Boots is too tough a nut for them to crack. Nipper & Co. decide to pay him back in his own coin and form a secret society in which Buster is subjected to a reign of terror, all to himself. The light of reason brought home to him at last the folly of his mad lust for power. He was sobered, and felt ashamed of himself. His old supporters now turned against him. They regarded him as a bully and a coward. In the last story of the series he proves to everyone that he is neither, and the Buster we came to know later, emerges. Incidentally, before I go on to the next character, I might add that Irene Manners & Co. of the Moor View School, make their appearance in this series, in No.436.

We have had an American, Japanese, Indian and Chinese already, belonging to the school, and now, just to show its cosmopolitan character, along comes Ulysses Spencer Adams of "Lil' ol' Noo York". As might be expected he is the son of a millionaire! Although inclined to extol America to the detriment of every other nation, he is decent enough in the main, and soon settles down. He was not featured prominently in later stories, but there is one series, in the 2nd New Series, in which he is made Form Captain, but that was a long way off.

Another chap with characteristics definitely off the beaten track was Hubert Jarrow, who arrived shortly after Adams in No.448. Jarrow became

known as the human gramophone. He was a terror to get into conversation with, for no-one knew where they would end up. When Handforth, in his customary brusque way, demanded to know his name, he answered him by saying, Jarrow. Without a second's pause he went on to take about Jarrow the town, from this to shipbuilding yards, measurements, feet, boots, Boots the Chemist, cameras, weather, fog, soup, tomatoes and fruit until he is stopped by Handforth (who is about to burst a blood vessel). One is inclined to sympathise with Handforth, for although amusing to read, I should imagine that Jarrow would have grown up to be the most crashing bore that ever was. It was amazing to the fellows how he would link up everything in the most natural way. They never knew, if they asked him the time, but that he would end up talking about knives and forks or some such totally unconnected subject.

Horace Stevens, later to become better known as William Napoleon Browne's friend, is mentioned for the first time in No.462.

A circus provides us with the next two new boys, Johnny and Bertie Onions. Their story begins in No.463 when they are members of the River House school. They do not transfer to St.Franks until No.470. The St.Franks juniors help them to run the circus which had been left on their hands by their father. There are many alarms and excursions owing to their manager, a beauty with the wonderful name of Simon Snayle, trying to wreck the show. The circus is eventually put on its feet and Snayle pays the penalty by dying of heart failure, which I thought was a bit hard on him!

With No.485 a slight change in the school takes place. The College House is renamed the Modern House, and the Remove, which has grown too big for Mr. Crowell to handle, is split in two. The Ancient House section, under Mr. Crowell was known as the Ancient House Fourth, and the Modern House juniors under a new master, the weedy and unpopular Mr.Horace Pycraft, are called the Modern House Fourth. Later this title is changed again to the Remove and Fourth, the Ancient House boarding the Remove and the Modern, the Fourth.

A nasty piece of work called Claude Carter made a short sojourn in the Remove, commencing with No.486. One of the seniors dies of heart failure during a champagne and gambling party. The ensuing scandal nearly results in St.Franks having to close down. Nevertheless, owing to Reggie Pitt, who was Form captain at the time, and other Removites, the situation is saved. Claude Carter, however, does his best to drag the name of St.Franks in the mud and it is mainly due to him that the Remove's efforts are nearly brought to nought. He is detected in this and is expelled in No.492.

Right at the top, among the names of the most popular characters that appeared in the "Nelson Lee" will be found the name of William Napoleon Browne (Napoleon being his own addition). Browne was the possessor of the most astonishing nerve of anyone in the school, and a practical joker of the first order. His first appearance at the school was enough to prove this. In the story No.513 he was en route to St.Franks to meet Stevens, prior to coming to the school as a scholar the following term. On his way he meets a Ruritanian sort of Prince, who is also going to

St. Franks to pay an informal visit. Browne persuades him that the school is composed of hooligans. The Prince, being a weedy sort as well as a first-rate snob, takes fright and cancels his appointment by telegram. Browne, also by telegram, retracts the first. When he arrives at St. Franks he is mistaken for the Prince. He is shown round the school by the Headmaster during which tour he was taken to the Third and Fourth classrooms, where the boys are at lessons. His first action is to give them the morning off! He dines with the Head and generally makes himself at home. By the time evening comes he has invited himself to stay the night, and is all set to carry the joke still further, when Handforth, who has discovered a photograph of the real prince, exposes him, thinking he is a crook. Handforth, of course, fancies himself as a detective, but he is a little crestfallen when Browne calmly announces that the Head is aware of his identity and has helped him to fool the school! The Headmaster of course is speechless, but soon the humour of the situation appeals to him and Browne is forgiven, but only a Browne could have talked his way out of it.

About this time the St. Franks Gallery was in full swing and we were introduced to a number of boys who had not been mentioned in the stories prior to this date. Most of them I fancy were introduced to swell the numbers of the Third, Fifth, and Sixth, as only a few of the fellows of these forms were brought into the stories, although nearly all of them were mentioned in subsequent yarns.

Whilst the Gallery was in progress, one 6th Former was mentioned in the stories - Guy Sinclair in No. 516. Sinclair was of Fullwood's breed, but with one particular difference, he was an excellent cricketer. It was Sinclair's shady habits that decide Fenton to cut him out of the First XI. Most of the seniors, not knowing Fenton's reasons, support Sinclair, some support Fenton. By judiciously fanning the flame of discontent, Sinclair, with the aid of Grayson and Shaw of the 5th, Fullwood and Co. of the Fourth, and Fullerton of the 3rd, manages to bring about a complete split in the school, and a bitter feud results. Sometime afterwards, in another story, when the feud is forgotten, he blackmails Mr. Beverley Stokes into making him captain of the West House where he institutes a reign of despotism. A barring-out ensues, and when Sinclair's blackmailing is exposed, it results in him being expelled. This was in No. 560.

Only one more newcomer remains to be mentioned. He was not a prominent character in himself, but by his friendship and demeanour manages to accomplish something that had never been managed before. I am referring to Fullwood's reformation. The miracle worker? - Clive Russell. It happens during a cruise to the South Seas when Lord Dorriemore befriends Clive's father. Russell Senior knows where an immense pearl fishing ground is to be found. He had shared expenses with a man he had thought was a friend, only to be tricked and left stranded in San Francisco. Lord Dorriemore hears the story, and taking the usual crowd with him set out for the South Seas, taking Mr. Russell and Clive as steward and cabin boy. An unwanted guest is Fullwood, who has wangled an invitation from Dorriemore. It is owing to Clive saving Fullwood's life from a shark that the latter gradually changes for the better. They became friends and when Russell's father decides to send him to St. Franks, Fullwood

manages to cut loose from his old associates and shares a study with Clive.

When the new term commences some radical changes have been made. The school had been rebuilt and instead of two Houses there were now four - the Ancient, Modern, West, and East Houses. This meant a complete re-shuffling of the juniors and considerable changes in the personnel of the various houses. Up to this point no less than 152 scholars had been mentioned, consisting of 29 Third Formers, 82 Removites, 22 Fifth Formers and 19 Sixth Formers. Other characters, not mentioned in this article amount to 109. This does not include members of the Moor View or River House Schools.

It is here that we must leave the school and its members, but I hope next year to complete the story of how they arrived.

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CHARACTERS OF THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY (OLD SERIES)

IN ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE

Third Formers	O.S. No.	House	Remove	O.S. No.	House
George Fullerton	122	Ancient	Nipper as Basil Bennett	112	Ancient
(Chubby) Joseph Heath	132	"	" " himself	166	"
Jack Owen (Minor)	152	"	Robert Christie	112	College
Christopher (Juicy) Lemon	154	"	Roddy Yorke	"	"
Dicky Jones	166	"	Charlie Talmadge	"	"
Ronald Parry (Minor)	188	College	Len Clapson	"	"
Stanley Kerrigan	263	Ancient	Harry Oldfield	"	"
Leonard Simms	301	College	Billy Nation	"	"
Willy Handforth	386	Ancient	Sir Launcelot Tregellis-		
Fred Mason	510	See Note 1	Tommy Watson	"	Ancient
Percy Ryder	"	"	Ralph Leslie Fullwood	"	"
Wally Sullivan	511	"	Albert Gulliver	"	"
Eric Gates	"	"	George Bell	"	"
Edgar Button	"	"	David Merrell	"	"
Cyril Harper	512	"	Frederick Marriott	"	"
Alfred Conroy (Minimus)	"	"	Matthew Noys	"	"
Bobby Dexter	513	"	Walter Church	"	"
Arthur Deakin	"	"	Teddy Long	"	"
Thomas Hobbs	514	"	Edward Oswald Handforth	"	"
Roderick Foote	"	"	Arnold McClure	"	"
Victor Hopkins	"	"	Owen Major	"	"
Thomas Tripp	515	"	Robert Canham	114	"
James Hook	"	"	Arthur Hubbard	"	"
Charlie Thompson	"	"	Short (6)	"	"
Jack Blythe	516	"	Timothy Griffiths	"	"
Billy Dale	"	"	Harold Doyle	"	"
Harry Dawson	"	"	Timothy Armstrong	"	"
Jimmy Hope	"	"	Lincoln	"	"

Remove (Contd.)	O.S. No.	House	Remove (Contd.)	C.S. No.	House
Walter Skelton	114	Ancient	Ulysses Spencer Adams	442	Ancient
Justin B. Farman	"	"	Hubert Jarrow	448	"
Clement Turner	116	College	Johnny Onions	463	"
Joseph Page	"	"	Bertie Onions	"	"
Donald Harton	"	"	Claude Carter (7)	486	"
Arthur Steele (6)	"	"	Clive Russell	529	"
William Freeman	128	"	<u>Fifth</u>		
Cecil De Valerie	132	Ancient	Harold Grayson	116	College
Kemp	"	"	Walter Bryant	138	Ancient
Sessue Yakama	133	"	Cuthbert Chambers	148	"
Tom Burton	137	"	Arthur Phillips	"	"
Cyril Conroy (Minor)	140	"	Stephen Perry	187	College
Eric Dallas	149	College	Frederick Shaw	188	"
Duke of Somerton	166	Ancient	Walter Hitchin	191	"
Reginald Pitt	170	"	William Simms	196	Ancient
Julien Clifton	175	"	Salter (6)	234	"
Jack Grey	178	"	Percival Drake	295	College
Nicodemus Trotwood	187	"	Reginald Swinton	301	"
Cornelius Trotwood	"	"	Edgar Sopp	443	"
Eugene Ellmore	203	"	Horace Stevens	462	Ancient
Robert Simmonds	"	"	Wallace	485	"
Young (6)	"	"	William Napoleon Browne	513	"
Titus Alexis	221	"	Bertram Love	517	See Note I
John Holroyd	223	College	Percival Drake	518	" " "
Edwin Monroe	"	"	Stanley Hulbert	"	" " "
Peter Cobb	"	"	George Hodder	"	" " "
Augustus Hart	"	Ancient	Howard Rowe	520	" " "
James (Fatty) Little	228	"	<u>Sixth</u>		
Timothy Tucker	236	"	Arthur Morrow (5)	112	Ancient
Hon. Douglas Singleton	240	"	Hobart Conroy (Major)(5)	118	"
Dick Goodwin	274	"	Walter Starke (2) (5)	125	"
Solomon Levi	285	"	Simon Kenmore (5)	"	"
Hubert Churchman	301	College	Arthur Lambert (3)	126	"
Holland	"	"	George Wilson (5)	135	"
Gale (6)	328	"	Edgar Fenton (5)	140	"
Hussi Rangit Lal Kahn	"	Ancient	Walter Reynolds (5)	187	College
John Willard as			Cyril Jesson	"	"
J. Martin	349	"	Herold Carlisle	"	"
Enoch Snipe	"	"	Herold Frinton	195	Ancient
Archie Glenthorne	352	"	Llewellyn Rees	196	"
Yung Ching	360	"	Percival Mills (5)	"	College
Larry Scott	393	"	Augustus Parkin	485	"
Alf Brent as			Guy Sinclair	516	Modern
Alf Huggins	408	"	Francis Goodchild	522	See Note I
Clarence Fellowe	416	"	Charles Payne	523	" " "
John Busterfield Boots	432	College	David Biggleswade (5)	524	Ancient
Horace Crowe	"	"	Leslie Stanhope	"	See Note I
George Webb	"	"			
Albert Crookes	"	"			
Walter Denny	"	"			
Percy Bray	"	"			

O.S.No.

Lord Dorriemore	105	Big Game Hunter and Explorer
Umlosi	"	Lord Dorriemore's companion. Chief of Kutamas
Nelson Lee as Mr. Alvington	112	Ancient House Housemaster
Dr. Malcombe Stafford	"	Headmaster
Mrs. Hake	"	Tuck shop proprietor
Mr. Crowell	114	4th Form Master later Remove master
Jonas Porlock	"	Proprietor of the White Hart Public House
Warren	120	Porter. Left in No.274
Arthur Gray	125	Capt. Bannington Grammar School Fourth
Inspector Jameson	126	Police Inspector Bannington
P. C. Sparrow	"	Policeman, Bellton.
Mrs. Poutter	129	Ancient House Housekeeper
Earl and Lady Westbrooke	130	Tregellis-West's Uncle and Aunt
Dr. Brett	132	Village Doctor
Jeremiah Mudford	133	Village Postman
Mr. Stockdale	136	College House Housemaster
Mike Bradmore	138	Bookmaker
Capt. Burton	139	Tom Burton's father. Later Skipper of Wanderer.
Mr. Goodall	"	Owner of racing boats at Caistowe
Tubbs	"	Ancient House Page Boy
Williams	142	Dr. Brett's
Mary Jane	148	Ancient House Housemaid
Mr. Suncliffe	154	Third Form Master
Monsieur Leblanc	156	French Master
Sir Crawford Grey	178	Jack Grey's father
Rev. Ethelbert Goodchild	197	Vicar of Bellton Church
Mr. Binks	198	Grocer of Bellton
Mr. Padgett	199	Fifth Form Master
Sir John Brent	206	Governor (Later Chairman)
Lady Mornington	237	Lord Dorriemore's sister
Ellen	250	Maidservant
Jane	"	Ancient House Cook
Broome	"	Head Gardener
Wiggins	254	Bellton Station Porter
Mr. Arthur Kirby	257	Handforth's Brother-in-law
Edith Handforth	"	Handforth's eldest sister
Sir Edward Handforth	260	Handforth's father
Mr. Hudson	"	1st officer on the "Wanderer"
Mr. McNabb	270	Chief Engineer, the "Wanderer"
Josh Cuttle	275	School Porter
Maude Cresswell	300	Headmaster's sister, m. Sir Horace (mentioned)
Jenkins	"	Headmaster's Butler before Phipps
Tinker	236	Sexton Blake's assistant
Colonel Glenthorne	253	Archie Glenthorne's father
Phipps	354	Archie Glenthorne's valet
Mr. Sharpe	363	Ironmonger of Bellton
Lumpy Bill	364	Bellton holligan. Blacksmith's son.

Mr. Fielding	365	Caistowe Motorboat Owner
Mr. Spence	384	Bellton Station-master
Farmer Holt	390	
Mr. Clifford	396	Sports Master
Miss Charlotte Bond	436	Headmistress Moor View School
Mrs. Tracey	"	Housekeeper Moor View School
Joe Catchpole	446	Foreman. Holt's Farm.
Tom Belcher	"	Farm Labourer, Holt's Farm.
Greggs	458	General handyman, St. Franks.
Mr. Beverley Stokes	471	Temporary Head. Later Housemaster West House.
Miss Perry	474	Under Mistress Moor View
Mr. Horace Pyecraft	485	Fourth Form Master
Professor Sylvester Tucker	494	Science Master
Mr. Robert Langton	527	6th Form Master
Mr. Warner Russell	529	Clive Russell's father.

THE MOOR VIEW SCHOOL. Introduced No.436

Violet Watson.	First mentioned	213
Ethel Church	"	"
Agnes Christine	"	"
Irene Manners	"	436
Marjorie Temple	"	439
Doris Berkeley	"	"
Tessa Love	"	464 with Onions Circus
"	"	470 Moor View
Joan Tarrant	"	474
Ena Handforth	"	488
Winnie Pitt	"	515

THE RIVER HOUSE SCHOOL. Intro.No. 143

Dr. Melyneux Hoggs	143	Principal
Mr. Wragg	"	Under Master
Hon. Aubrey De Vere Wellborne	"	
Hon. Bertram Cersteirs	"	
Hon. Cyril Coates	"	
Hal Brewster	"	
George Glynne	"	
Dare Ascott	"	
Leighton	"	

Kingswood, Norton, Hawke, Brampton, Grant, Bingham, All No.312.

Riley No. 455

NOTES

- (1) Mentioned only in Portrait Gallery, St. Frank's Magazine.
- (2) Expelled No. 211.
- (3) Expelled No. 126
- (4) Expelled No. 222
- (5) Prefects
- (6) Mentioned once or twice only. Assumed to have left.
- (7) Expelled 492

A Pleasant Evening.

By P. A. Walker

A few weeks ago I was very pleased to receive an ancient copy of the Gem from one of the enthusiastic members of our circle of collectors. The title of the story was "Grimes of the Fourth", and dealt with the arrival at St. Jim's of the village grocer's boy. It occurred to me after reading this good old-fashioned yarn, that the number of characters appearing fairly regularly in the St. Jims-Greyfriars saga not actually in the schools themselves was quite considerable. Consequently I spent an engrossing evening recently checking how many I could find. I must confess that my observations are not complete. Neither have I included "birds of passage" such as characters like a temporary master around which a "fifteen number" series was built.

Some intensely interesting stories were written around many of these characters, and one of my earliest recollections is Miss Priscilla Fawcett, Tom Merry's governess. It is only natural that the introduction of this character causes one to think back to the days of pony and trap; leisurely local trains chuffing into country stations; Archibald Joyce waltzes; strawberries and cream at garden parties; hot sunshine and dusty roads; pleasant days on the river; school sports with Coronation mugs as prizes, and, of course, the feeling of spaciousness that went with those pre-1914 days. The complete inability of Miss Fawcett to recognise that Tom Merry was growing up is probably a little too far-fetched, and, at any rate to me, this tendency to caricature certain characters which have appeared regularly over the years, has always been one of Mr. Charles Hamilton's weak points.

"Miss Priscilla's Mission" is the title of a story I have in my possession.

Another female of similar type is Coker of the Fifth's Aunt Judy, who appears quite frequently, usually to "put the wind up" the venerable Head and Mr. Prout. Taggles, of course, is a St. Jim's institution, as is Gosling of Greyfriars. Neither character appears to have done much else except "let in" late-comers, or hoist up offenders for the purpose of enabling either Dr. Holmes or Dr. Locke to administer chastisement. Both are extremely susceptible to tips from the wealthier members of all forms, and both are irascible grumblers. They also have a weakness for "the bottle". They are very definite characters, and are part and parcel of the famous yarns.

Two very attractive feminine "regulars" are Cousin Ethel and Marie Rivers. Cousin Ethel is, of course, in the very early issues of the Gem, and we love the little episodes which occur between Figgins and the one and only Gussy. She had a Boys Friend 3d. Library all to herself which was entitled "Cousin Ethel's Schooldays".

I always seem to connect her Gem appearances with the German spies who abounded in the Sussex countryside between 1914 and 1918. She has been rescued by hair's breadths from being gored to death by frantic bulls, or a watery grave in the River Sark. curiously in flood both in

July and December. Merie Rivers, the associate of Talbot in many fine yarns, was a very well drawn character, although she appeared to possess the ways and outlook of a young woman of thirty at the age of sixteen. The stories entitled "The Call of the Past", "Cast out from the School", and "Loyal to the Last" brought her well to the fore with another outside character, her father, John Rivers, the crackman, who later made amends, became a corporal, and finished the war a captain and V.C. "Winning his Spurs", another grand Talbot yarn, also had Merie Rivers well featured, and included another fairly regularly appearing character, one Hookey Walker.

These Talbot yarns appealed to me more than any others during a period of particularly fine stories. 1915 saw the appearance of a down-at-heel actor, one Horatio Curll, who found solace in whisky and soda, and was responsible for luring Monty Lowther away from school on several occasions, once in an amusing yarn called the "Call of the Cinema". No sound films in those days! The pianist plugging away for dear life, preferably the last resounding bars of "Orpheus in the Under-world", fading at the appropriate moment into "If you were the only girl in the world".

Lowther was saved from much trouble and woe by faithful friends in another tale of the stage and Horatio Curll. Joseph Banks, a gentleman of turf and tavern is seen regularly in the pages of the Gem. He has been responsible for relieving many erring schoolboys of their surplus cash. Despite many immersions in ditch and duckpond at the hands of high-minded St. Jim's juniors, he continued to enjoy the company, at late hours, of Messrs. Cutts, Knox, Levison, Crooke and Company.

Harry Wharton's uncle, Colonel Wharton of Wharton Lodge, Surrey, came into the Greyfriars picture mostly at holiday times, Christmas being his favourite period. With Wharton's Aunt Amy he was part of the country house background for many thrilling Yuletide adventures, usually coming to the fore at about midnight, clad in dressing-gown, and heavily armed with a poker in order to give some attention to some marauder. Wharton Lodge has apparently been burgled, and "ghost-hunted" more than any other Surrey mansion, and has been the scene of some really fine yarns. One cannot leave the place without mention of Wells, the butler, but I have a faint recollection of another name like Werningham in the early Magnets.

When sinister chauffeurs and "corny" schoolmasters were hanging around Greyfriars one could always bet that it wouldn't be long before the famous detective, Ferrers Locke, looked in. With an ex-Removite, Jack Drake, in attendance, he could be reckoned to bring the criminal to book within sixteen issues of the Magnet. But, it must be confessed, not without the invaluable assistance of the Famous Five, invariably led by the Bounder, who had the culprit "teped", practically as Locke was stepping from the train at Courtfield Junction.

Mention of the police brings to mind the frequent appearances of P.Cs. Tover and Crump, of Friardale and Rylcombe Constabularies respectively. It is doubtful whether such types exist today, or have ever existed, even for village policemen, but probably they did in our country districts, before crime became one of our major industries.

Another policeman who occasionally graced Greyfriars was Inspector Skeat, but we have always wondered how on earth he rose to such eminence, as the Remove were always on the spot first. One remembers the ease with which the Bounder shielded Jim Valentine when Skeat was on his heels, and another occasion when a temporary master named Steel and the portly inspector were outwitted by Wharton and Vernon-Smith.

Some of the most popular stories were those which introduced the Highcliffe crowd. The great "Pon" who should, apparently, have been at Borstal, and not Highcliffe. Gadsby and Vavasour and Monson; Frank Courtenay and his chum De Courcy; Mr. Mobbs, the fawning form-master, and the curious Dr. Voysey. All these people were introduced from time to time in many a grand series. A story always fresh in my mind dealt with Wibley's impersonation of the effable Mr. Mobbs. An unlikely yarn, but highly amusing.

The Cliff House girls appeared regularly over a long period, and St. Jim's had its rival school in Rylcombe Grammar School. Gordon Gay and Co. were for ever thinking up some jape only to be finally dished by Tom Merry and Co. after many duckings and snow-fights.

Reverting to the racing and billiards playing fraternity, we had Tickey Tapp of unenviable reputation, Joey Cobb of the Three Fishers, and many other gentlemen who exuded beer and baccy!

The frequent holidays spent by the St. Jim's men at Eastwood House served to introduce Lord Eastwood and Gussy's elder brother Lord Conway, a young gentleman whose age was very difficult to determine, although he seemed to serve with distinction in the 1914-1918 war.

Towards the end of this war a gentleman of unkempt appearance and ^{only} character made his bow in the St. Jim's district, namely Mr. Zachariah Pepper. Mr. Pepper owned a barn which became famous as the headquarters of the St. Jim's parliament. One outstanding yarn in which this barn played a prominent part was the Gem Christmas Number of 1917, "A Shadow of the Past", featuring Valentine Outram, a schoolboy strong man who used it as a hide-out from law and order, and despite the loss of several stones owing to his privations and a diet of turnips from the fields, proceeded to lay out several St. Jim's juniors of great fighting qualities. J.N. Pentelow, I believe, wrote most of the stories dealing with the St. Jim's parliament. No doubt Mr. Eric Fayne would be able to cover this.

Some mention must be made of the various "regulars" who were either shopkeepers or tradespeople such as Uncle Clegg, Mr. Mible, Mrs. Mible, Mrs. Kebble and others. I always disliked Charles Hamilton's habit of using a name for tradespeople which was a sort of pun, such as "Miss Bunn", of a certain Courtfield or Wayland confectionery establishment, or "Mr. Topper" who kept a hatshop. And, of course, the use of terms like "Welshers handicap" & the "Swindle'em Stakes". I think this would have been more understandable if the particular yarn was intended to be comical, but it was frequently introduced into stories which had the possible expulsion of a wrong-doer, and contained chapters of some dramatic quality.

Colonel Potter, Sir Reginald Brooke are old favourites, and there comes to mind two very famous characters who have been in the Gem most of its

life, Herries bulldog Towser, and Wally d'Arcy's Pongo. I have recollections of both at one time or another having tales to themselves.

Amongst the many parents who have regularly appeared, Mr. Herbert Samuel Vernon-Smith, the Bounder's father, is remembered because of his efforts to get the Head to rescind his decision about his son's expulsion, so richly deserved. Major Cherry, Tom Redwing's father, Mr. Levison, and Mr. William Bunter have all looked in from time to time.

The character who first inspired this idea of mine, Grimes, the grocer's boy from Rylcombe, was a member of the village football team who frequently visited St. Jim's, and at Greyfriars Solly Lazerus and his father, who supplied wit with his props, were frequently mentioned.

There were many other characters who moved through this great series, and all have helped to contribute towards some grand tales, which to my mind have never been surpassed in schoolboy fiction.

FENN, CLIVE ROBERT:

Born about 1870. Son of famous writer for boys, George Manville Fenn. Wrote for the Old Flag (Nov.) 1899 "The White Flower" (Digby) 1900, and one or two other books. Contributed to Aldine publications, Answers Library, Pluck, Heartsease, Home Circle, Girls Friend, Diamond Library, Boys Friend, etc. at one time Competition Editor, Amalgamated Press. Was one of the substitute writers of St. Jim's, and Greyfriars stories, and in the opinion of the "Master", the best of the bunch. A very modest and quietly clever man. Had an article in "Tom Merry's Annual".

FINNEMORE, JOHN E:

His historical story "The Black Galley", was one of the three serials starting in No.1 of the Boys Realm (1902), Later wrote several serials and complete stories concerning Tom Sandys, Teddy Lester & Co. of Slapton School. One of most popular characters was a Jap. That was in the days of course when we used to sing about "gallant little Japan". Interesting feature about Slapton was Rugby was played instead of the usual Soccer. All the Slapton stories were published in book form and can be found to-day in most public libraries. They are well worth reading being an ideal blend of humour, sport and adventure. Recently re-published six volumes by Latimer House, Ludgate Hill.

HAWKE, CAPT. ROBERT:

Best known as the writer of the Baldy's Angels, flying stories which had a long run in the Ranger, and later re-published in the Boys Friend Library. Also wrote detective, speedway, and adventure stories for the Ranger, and other A.P. Papers.

Collectors' Who's Who

Compiled by Herbert Leckenby

A Collector's Digest Annual without its Who's Who would be like Hamlet without the Prince. It has become to mean as much to story paper collectors as Wisden's to devotees of king cricket. It has been a sheer delight to hear time and time again of firm friendships that have been formed by its aid.

It is interesting to note that our youngest member is 13, our eldest 75, and there's almost every other age in between. There are a large number of new names, and we have an idea we shall be saying the same thing next year.

We have made a slight alteration this year by placing collectors' likes in order of preference.

Here are the Groups:

1. Victorian Papers.
2. Early 20th Century.
3. Aldines.
4. Captain, Boys' Own Paper, Chums and similar papers.
5. "Hamilton" Papers.
(a) Magnet, (b) Gem, (c) Penny Popular, (d) Schoolboys' Own,
(e) Holiday Annual.
6. Sexton Blake.
(a) Union Jack, (b) Sexton Blake Libraries.
(c) Detective Weeklies.
7. Nelson Lee and Monster Libraries.
8. Between Two Wars.
(Champion, Thriller, Ranger, Modern Boy, etc.)
9. School Friend, Schoolgirls' Own, etc.
10. Comics.

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* Denotes Collector's first appearance in Who's Who.

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ADLEY, DEREK JOHN

19 Braithwaite Gardens, Stanmore, Middlesex. 'Phone: Wordsworth 4484.

Age 22. Groups 5 (a) (b). 7. 5(e) (d) (c) 6(b) (a) (c). 3.

Interested mainly in stories by Charles Hamilton, Maxwell Scott and E.S. Brooks. Has been collecting 10 years and has now about 2,000 papers. Compiles lists of titles of most boys' papers.

* ANDERSON, L. T.

51 Holmewood Gardens, Brixton Hill, London, S.W.2.

Age 38. Group 5 (a) (b) (e) (c) (d).

ALLEN, LEONARD M.

3, Montgomery Drive, Sheffield 7.

Age 43. Groups 4, 7, 2, 6(a) (b) (c). 5(c). 8. 5(d) (b) (a).

Requires Nelson Lees (old series); comic papers (1912-1926); Captains, Chums, Cheerio, Nugget 3d. Libraries, etc.

ARMITAGE, TOM

205, Batley Road, Alverthorpe, Wakefield, Yorks.

Age 45. Groups 5 (a to e), 6(a) (b) (c). 7. 8.

In Group 8 particularly interested in Boys' Herald, Young Britain, and Boys' Weekly.

* BARTLETT, C.J.

20, Broomfield Road, Beckenham, Kent.

Age 18. Groups 5(a) (b) (d) (e).

At present has no collection, but is keenly interested in St.Jims and Greyfriars stories and would like to have Gems and Magnet lists. His father was a reader in the early days of the two papers.

BARTLETT, HENRY J. H.

Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

Groups 2, 3, 4, 5(a) (b) (d) (e).

Is particularly interested in Sidney Drew's Ferrers Lord stories, also Fantasie, and the Captain Justice yarns. In Group 4 not interested in Captains.

BARNETT, LEONARD

2, New Street, Pittshill, Stoke-on-Trent.

Age 31. Group 5 (a) (d).

BAWDEN, WILLIAM L.

7, Penryn Street, Redruth, Cornwall.

Group 5.

BAXENDALE, VINCENT ANTHONY

1, Vincent Street, Openshaw, Manchester 11.

Age 30. Groups 5(a) (b) (e) (c). 6(b) (c) (a). 7. 8.

* BEARDSELL, FREDERICK CLIFFORD

"Plymstock", Ross Avenue, Davenport, Stockport, Cheshire.

Age 45. Groups 5(a) (b) (d). 6(a).

Has been a keen reader of Magnets and Gems since 1912 and is as interested as ever. Enjoys discussing the papers with others.

BENNETT, RAYMOND V.

64, Dudley Road, Tipton, Staffs.

Groups 5(a). 7. 5(b) (d). 6(a).

BENTLEY, J. BREEZE

4, Grenfell Drive, Bradford Moor, Bradford.

Group 5(a) (b) (d).

BLUNDEN, ANTHONY

43, Elmfield Avenue, Teddington, Middlesex.

Age 14. Groups 5(a) (d) (b) (e) (c).

On the look out for Magnets between 1000-1120, Gems 914-917, 100-1100. S.O.L's, Greyfriars, St.Jims and Rockwoods before 300. Any Boys' Friends. Also S.O.L's 303, 354, 381, 402, 405, 408, 411.

BLYTHE, ROBERT

46, Carleton Road, Holloway, London, N.7.

Age 34. Groups 7. 5(a).

As most collectors are aware is the No.1 authority on the Nelson Lee Library. Until recently had a complete collection; then three copies, No's 139, 140 and 141 old series were stolen at the London Exhibition. Naturally extremely anxious to replace these. Also wants Magnets below 1000.

* BOLAND, JOHN A.

12, Cullenswood Gardens, Merton Drive, Ranelagh, Dublin, Eire.

Age 18. Groups 5(a) (b) (d).

Is as keen on the Magnet as members of an older generation. Possesses a straight run of 133. Also a few Gems and S.O.L's. All in mint condition. Wishes to obtain C.D's prior to October 1948. Attends University of Dublin (Trinity College).

BOND, HERBERT MAURICE

10 Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

Age 37. Group 6 (all).

BOTTOMLEY, FRED

48 Downhills Park Road, Tottenham, London, N.17.

Group 5 (all).

* BRADSHAW, WALTER A.

3644 N. Oakley Avenue, Chicago, 18, Illinois, U.S.A.

Age 54. Groups 6 (a) (e)

BRETHEERTON, T.P.

Heskin, Nr. Cherley, Lancs.

Groups 1 and 2.

Wishes to obtain Boys' Leader (Pearsons) 54 to 101, Lot-o'-Fun, Comic Cuts.

BRANTON, W. LESLIE

63 Thoresby Street, Hull, Yorks.

Group 5 (a) (e).

Has succeeded in obtaining in just a year 800 Magnets and 7 Holiday Annuals. Is particularly anxious to add Magnet No. 1186. Has several Magnets for exchange.

BURROW, RONALD

1, Albert Square, Yeadon, Leeds.

Age 38. Groups 7. 5 (a) (b).

Anxious to obtain Nelson Lees (old series) 17, 30, 78, 114. Also ½d. Marvel Vol.I (1894).

CALDWELL, RAYMOND L.

P.O. Box 515, Lancaster Pa, U.S.A.

Age 55. Groups 1, 2, 3, 6.

Desires to obtain complete files of above groups; but also has specimens of all others. Particularly would like to buy volumes or loose numbers of Boys of London and any similar large story papers of that period. Also many other Victorian sets and volumes. Has an enormous collection of over 60,000 American and English papers.

* CASE, FRANCIS

4, Dee Street, Liverpool 6.

Age 43. Groups 5 (all). 7. 8. 6(a) (b). 3. 2. 4. 1. 6(c).

CHILD, A.C.

64. Gilbertstone Avenue, Birmingham 26.

Group 7.

* CHECKLEY, PETER

18, Tarlington Road, Coundon, Coventry.

Age 15. Groups 5, 6, 8

Has a small collection of Victorian papers. Also Magnets and Gems. Unlike most collectors, has quite a large quantity of recent papers of the Wizard and Rover type. Would like to obtain more Magnets and S.O.L's, and No.6 of the Champion.

CLOUGH, W.

3, Fonthill Grove, Sale, Manchester.

Age 49. Groups 2. 3. 6(a) (b). 7.

Requires Aldine Dick Turpins; Black Bess; Boys' Comic Library; Nugget Library (Peter Flint series); Boys' Friend 3d Libs.; Ferrers Lord series and Calcroft stories). Diamond Library (Kettle series)
1 - 100 Nelson Lee's (old series).

COOK, R. W.

30, Lucien Road, Tooting Bec, London, S.W.17.

Age 27. Groups 5(a) (d) (b) (a) (c). 8 (Rangers).

Possesses 586 Magnets, 36 Gems, 62 S.O.L's, 3 Holiday Annuals. Wishes to obtain Rangers 1-15; most pre-1930 Magnets, also 1120, 1152, 1250, 1257, 1259, 1277, 1377-79, 1382, 1401/2.

COOK, JOHN R.

178 Maria Street, Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne. (Novocastrian Story Paper Collectors' Club).

Groups 7. 5(a) (b) (c) (d). 6(a) (b) (c). 8 (Thrillers).

Only requires about 200 Nelson Lees to complete collection. Collection has grown considerably during the year. Lists exchanged. Invites northern collectors to join the Novocastrian Story Paper Collectors' Club.

COOK, JAMES W.

4, Swanston Path, Oxhey Estate, Watford, Herts.

Age 41. Groups 7. 5(a) (c).

Main interest: Nelson Lee and St. Franks stories. So much so that he has a son named Nelson Lee.

CORBETT, J.

49, Glyn Farm Road, Quinton, Birmingham.

Age 38. Group 5 (all).

Collection now consists of Magnets 1923-1927 complete; 1928-1935 incomplete; 1930-1940 complete; 9 vols. Holiday Annual, and 100 Gems. Also keenly interested in classical music records; possesses 1000 discs.

COLCOMBE, WILLIAM HENRY

256, South Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

Age 28. Groups 6 (b) (a) (c). 5(a) (d).

* CROLLIE, R.J.

8, Lytton Road, Romford, Essex.

Age 32. Groups 5(a) (b) (d). 7. 5(2) (e). 2.

Anxious to obtain all Magnets prior to 1915. Alternatively numbers of Schoolboys' Own or Popular containing reprints of those stories. Only just started collecting and so far has about 100 Magnets and Gems of 1915-17 period. Holiday Annuals 1931-2-3. B.O.P. Vol.14 (1891-2).

DAINES, COLIN

202, Mile Cross Lane, Norwich.

Age 39. Groups 7. 5(a) (b).

Has been reading and collecting over 30 years. At present concentrating on Nelson Lees. Requires a few between 1-100, old series.

DARWIN, WILFRED

76 Western Road, East Dene, Rotherham.

Group 6 (a).

Anxious to obtain Union Jacks numbers 1208, 1161, 1130, 1149, 1159. Also "The Affair of the Willow Pattern Plate" and "The Sign of the Saracen". Also interested in Boys' Magazine and wishes to obtain certain numbers from 332 onwards.

* DERRY, JOHN

2, Ash Villas, Herbert Road, Hucknall Road, Nottingham.

Age 37. Groups 6(b), 5(d) (a).

Started collecting May 1949. Collection consists mainly of nearly all Sexton Blake Libraries 3rd series. Was a staunch supporter of the Magnet and Nelson Lee Library between 1920-1934. Anxious to obtain S.B.L's 1st and 2nd series and S.O.L's containing Greyfriars stories.

DICKENSON, D.C.

16 Addison Crescent, London, W.14.

Age 47. Groups 5(a) (b).

Particularly interested in very early Magnets.

DOLPHIN, REX

5, Brays Meadow, Hyde Heath, Amersham, Bucks.

Age 34. Group 6.

Particularly wishes to obtain all Pierre Quiroule's stories in S.B.L. (1st series).

DOWLER, HARRY

86, Hamilton Road, Longsight, Manchester 13.

Age 59. Groups 2. 4.

Requires Maxwell Scott stories in 1st d. U.J., Pluck, Marvel, 1d. U.J. and Boys' Friend 3d. and 4d. Library. Also Nelson Lee Library (1st series) No's 7, 8, 13 and 48.

DOW, JAMES, Junr.

73, King Street, Aberdeen.

Age 35. Groups 5(e). 7. 5(c) (b).

EDGELEY, BRIAN R.

9, Southway, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey.

Age 17. Groups 6(b) (a). 5(d). 6(c).

Is also interested in pre-war Hotspurs. Anxious to obtain early numbers Sexton Blake Library 3rd series. Would exchange Champions (1942-48) and Boys' Own Papers (1938-49) for S.B.L's (all series) and Hotspurs No.1 to 1944. Has collection of 150 S.B.L's and 250 Hotspurs.

EDWARDS, W.E.

Mill Green Park (Annexe), Ingatestone, Essex.

Group 5(a).

FAYNE, ERIC

The Modern School, Grove Road, Surbiton, Essex.

Groups 5. 6. 8.

FENN, WM. H.

P.O. Box 127, Auckland, C.I., New Zealand.

Age 47. Groups 1. 9.

Has been collecting about 12 years. Wishes to make complete sets of Aldine Spring-Healed Jack, Claud Duval, Jack Sheppard, Dick Turpin, Robin Hood and Red Rover. Also wishes to collect Comics published before 1912, such as Comic Cuts, Comic Life, Chips, Butterfly, Jesters, Big Budgets, Lot-o-Fun and others.

FENNELL, HUGH W.

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

Groups All, particularly 1, 3 and 2.

Requires "The Wild Boys of London", "The Socialist Girl", Frank Reados. Odd numbers of "Skeleton Horseman", "Boy Detective", etc. Complete set of Scoops.

FLINDERS, E.B. (Miss)

"Roseview", Gosmore Road, Nr. Hitchin, Herts.

Group 5(b) (a) (c) (d).

Is always willing to exchange early Gems and Magnets. Also very specially wanted Magnets, 903, 234; Gems 95, 96, 185. 7/6 each offered. Penny Populars (2d series) wanted 17-50. 2/6 each.

FORD, DEREK

42, West Bond Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

Group 6(a) (b) (c).

FOSTER, GEORGE C.

26, Kelso Place, London, W.8.
Group 5 (all).

GANDER, WILLIAM HENRY

Box 60, Transcona, Manitoba, Canada.
Age 51. Groups 5(a). 2 (Boys' Friend). 5 (b).

* GARRATT, ANTHONY WHITAKER

275, Chester Road, Little Sutton, Wirral, Cheshire.
Age 27. Groups 5(a) (c) (e).

Requires Holiday Annuals, 1921-1926 inclusive. "Popular" 2nd series 1919-1931. Collection destroyed during the war and is endeavouring to build up again.

GEAL, JOHN W.

277, Kings Road, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.
Age 28. Groups 5(a). 8. 7.

Has now 750 Magnets. Particularly wants Magnets 900-1060. Also interested in Modern Boy or Boys' Friend Lib., Captain Justive yarns.

GOCHER, JOHN WOODWARD, Junr.

Victoria Cottage, Constitution Hill, Sudbury, Suffolk.
Age 25. Groups 6(a) (b) (c). 5 (all). 8. 4. 3. 2. 1. 7.

Requires books by Geo. E. Rochester (John Beresford, Eric Roche and John Allen) Boys' Wonder Library, Triumphs (Sept. 1937-39. Always interested in details concerning authors of boys' papers. Letters welcomed.

GRAINGER, GEORGE P.

Alexandra Road, Peynter's Lane End, Redruth, Cornwall.
Groups 3. 2. 1. 6(a).

Wanted: Boys' Friends 523, 566, 568, 575, 577-81, 597, 603, 604, 616, 1042, 1054, 1073, 1084, 1103, 1104, 1106, 1107, 1110, 1111, 1112.
ld. Union Jacks; Early Aldine Libraries, Inventions, True Blues, Tip Tops &c.

GROOMBRIDGE, CEDRIC J.

12 Barnwell Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton.
Age 27. Groups 5. 7.

GROOM, WILLIAM

52 Wrexham Road, Fairfield Road, Bow, London, E.3.
Group 5(a) (b) (d).

* GUNN, JOHN (B.M./Jaygee, London, W.C.1)

Manager, The Miltons Head Hotel, Nottingham.
Groups 7. 5(a) (b). 8 (Thriller).

Started reading boys' magazines 1913, favourites at that time being Jack, Sam and Pete stories in the Marvel and the Penny Popular. Later revelled in Nelson Lees particularly "Green Triangle" series Started re-collecting about January 1948. Has now several Chums Annuals, Gems 1574 to end, Magnets 1522 to end, a few Holiday Annuals. Requires Monsters 1, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 19. Has 62 Nelson Lees between 1-100.

HARVEY, (MRS.)
123 Penydre, Rhiwrina, Cardiff.
Group 5(a) (b).

HARRIS, ARTHUR
Cayton, Llanrhos Road, Penryn Bay, Llandudno.
Group 10.

Collects Comics only and always pleased to hear from anyone with copies to offer, especially between 1890-1914.

HARRIS, A.K.
6 Boughton Close, St. Johns, Worcester.
Group 5(b).

HESS, GEORGE H.
40 N. Mississippi River Blvd., St. Paul, 4, Mass. USA.
All Groups.

HEWITT H.
14 Wood View, Gawber, Barnsley, Yorkshire.
Group 5.

HOLGATE, ALFRED G.
169 The Grampians, Western Gate, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.6.
Age 39. Groups 3. 5(a) (b) (d). 6(a).

* HOMER, HARRY M.
Yulden Farm, Heathfield, Sussex.
Groups 6 (all). 5(all). 7. 4. 2. 8. 3. 1.

Particularly interested in the Confederation, Plummer, Huxton Rymer, and other "characters" in Sexton Blake stories.

HOOPER, H.R.
133 Powell House, Lower Clapton Road, London, E.5.
Groups 5 (all). 6(a) (b).

HORSEY, ALFRED L.
60 Salcombe Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17.
Groups 5(a) (c) (b). 1, 2, 3, 4 7.

HUDSON, REGINALD A.
5 Throstle Row, Leeds 10.
Age 46. Groups 5 (b) (a) (d) (c) (e). 7.

Would like to obtain Christmas Double Numbers of Gem and Magnet. Especially "The Mystery of the Painted Room". Correspondence from collectors invited.

* HOBARD, ERNEST ALEXANDER
58 South View Crescent, Sheffield 7.
Age 43. Groups 5(a). 7. 5(b).

When filling in questionnaire (August) said, "I am quite new to collecting. I have exactly three specimens in my collection, but seeing that I obtained them the very day I began to be interested I got quite a kick out of it. I hope soon to have a presentable collection."

HUGHES, E.V.

"Caswell", 25 Hillsboro' Road, Bognor Regis.
Groups 1. 2.

HUMPHRIES, KENNETH

61 Long Hill Rise, Hucknall, Notts.
Groups 5, 7.

HUNTER, J. V. B. STEWART

4 Lulworth Road, Mottingham, London, S.E.9.
Age 50. Groups 1, 3, 2.

HUNTER, RONALD H.

C/o Royal Mail Agencies (Brazil) Ltd., Avenida Rio Branco 55/57,
Rio to Janeiro, Brazil, South America.
Age 36. Group 5(a) (b) (c) (d) (e).

Has now some 1400 Magnets with an unbroken run from 1917 to the end with the exception of one missing copy in 1919 and five in 1923. Has also 200 Boys' Friends (Rookwood period) and wants more, first eight Holiday Annuals (1920-1927).

* IMPSON, STANLEY A.

Stanfield, Jerningham Road, New Costessy, Norwich.
Age 52. Groups 5(a) (b) (d) (e), 6(a) (b) (c).

Read the Magnet from the beginning and for many years afterwards. The Gem less often. Has now started re-collecting and finds in the papers a valuable relaxation and a reminder of a happy boyhood.

JENKINS, ROGER M.

Strathmore, 3 Town Hall Road, Havant, Hants.
Age 24. Group 5(a) (c) (b) (d) (e).

KIRBY, GORDON J.

250 Mess Street, North Carlton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
Age 24. Groups 5, 9.

KEELING, FRANK

93 Aldridge Avenue, Stanmore, Middlesex.
Age 42. Groups 7. 5(a).

LAWSON, A.W.

13 Charles Square, Hoxton, London, N.1.
Age 75. Group 1.

Our oldest member. Requires certain volumes of Bow Bells, Family Herald, Boys of England, Boys' Comic Journal, Young Men of Great Britain, London Reader, London Journal and Penny Miscellany. Lists on application.

LANDY, ERIC R.

4 Nuneaton Road, Dagenham, Essex.
Group 3.

A number of Dick Turpins and Claude Duvals required to complete sets.

* LEAR, JOHN FREDERICK

79 Tower Road, Newquay, Cornwall.

Age 38. Groups 1, 5(all), 2, 3, 7, 8.

Built up a considerable collection in school days. Was stimulated by accounts of the phenomenal one owned by John Medcraft and used to haunt bookshops and stalls over a large area near Ilford. An advert. concerning Collectors' Miscellany in 1948 re-aroused his interest and desires to collect way back to Varney the Vampyre. Would particularly like to get complete set of Holiday Annuals and Monster Libraries.

LECKENBY, HERBERT

Telephone Exchange, c/o Central Registry, Northern Command, York.

Age 59. All Groups.

Is always glad to have offers of papers in Groups 1, 2, and 3 for research purposes.

MACHIN, HUBERT

38 St. Thomas Road, Moor Park, Preston, Lancs.

Group 5(a).

MARTIN, WILLIAM

93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10.

Enterprising dealer who due to extensive advertising always has the popular papers for sale.

MARTIN, THOMAS H.

37 Twinnell Street, Easton, Bristol, 5.

Though no longer a collector, still takes a keen interest, especially in all matters concerning Sexton Blake.

* MASON, E.C.

20 Warriston Gardens, Edinburgh, 4.

Age 48. Groups 2, 1, 5(b) (a) (c), 6(b), 7.

Small collection recently begun, chiefly Hendersons, Young Folks Tales, Tales for Little People, Books for the Bairns, Interested in anything connected with Roland Quiz.

* MCCABE, ROBERT

74 Ann Street, Dundee, Angus, Scotland.

Groups 5 (all), 6(all).

* McFARLANE, JAMES

106 Beith Street, Glasgow, W.1.

Age 47. Groups 5(a) (b) (d) (c), 6(a) (b), 5(e).

Collection consists of Magnets 1452-1683, Gems 1450-1663. 101 Schoolboys' Own Libs. 44 Sexton Blake, 7 Holiday Annuals.

MCCREEVY, D.

17 Edward Street, Lurgan, Co. Armagh, N.Ireland.

Groups 5 (all), 7, 8 (Thomsons).

McPHERSON, E.

80 Benedict Street, Glastonbury.
Age 34. Group 8, 5(a) (b) (c).

Has been collecting for many years and now has almost complete set of Nelson Lees. Only numbers required are 106 old series and a few, also old series, between 113 and 150.

MEDCRAFT, JOHN

64 Woodland Road, Ilford, Essex.
Age 55. Groups 2, 1, 3.

Special requirements: Henderson's Lot-o-Fun Nos. 1-100 (1906/8), Wild West, Nugget Library, Aldine Jack Sheppard, Spring-Healed Jack. Magnets Nos. 171, 265, 281, 282, 288, 289, 293, 294, 297, 299. Gem No.641.

* MORTIMER, ROBERT

115 Walton Road, East Molesey, Surrey.
Age 48. Group 5(a) (d) (b).

Started collecting Magnets in early days of the war. Walking down Wandsworth High Street spotted an old boy on the pavement selling second-hand books. He had a huge pile of Magnets and a few S.O.L's. He said Magnets were 1d. and S.O.L's 2d. Much to his surprise bought the lot. Has now about 700 Magnets and fair number of S.O.L's.

MURTAGH, J. R.

509 Selwood Road, Hastings, New Zealand.
Age 36. Groups 7, 5 (all), 6 (all).

* ORR, W. S.

3 Hartfield Terrace, Dumbarton, Scotland.
Age 47. Groups 5(a) (b) (c), 6(a), 2, 8 (Boys' Friend).

Spent several years in Central Africa and is now an accountant with a firm of Dumbarton shipbuilders. Hon. Treasurer of the County of Dumbarton Boys' Scouts. Also a keen philatelist.

* O'DONOHUE, PATRICK

Seaport House, New Docks, Galway, Ireland.
Age 33. Groups 8, 7.

Anxious to obtain Moys Magazines, Rangers, Pilots, Bullseyes, Nelson Lees, Buffalo Bills, Black Bess, Robin Hood, and other similar.

OSBORN, FRANK

24 Harpur Street, Bedford.
Groups 2, 5(b), 3, 4, 1, 5(d) (a), 6(b) (a),

Wishes to obtain Boys' Friend 3d. Libs., early Scouts, "Tom Merry's Conquest", Marvels (early), Chums bound volumes only Vol.3 and 8, and 1913-18 inclusive.

PACKMAN, LEONARD

27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.
Age 44. Groups 5(b), 7, 5(c), 6(a), 5(a) 6(b), 5(d), 3, 2, 5(e).
Most anxious to obtain copy of Union Jack No.1161, "The Mystery of the Painted Slippers".

* PACKMAN, (Mrs.) M. J.

27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22

Groups 5(b), 6(a), 7.

Particularly requires Gems Nos. 356, 358, 359, 375 and 879, and any stories featuring Talbot between 700 and 800.

PAGE, VINCENT A.

The Modern School, Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

Age 13. Group 5 (all).

One of the younger generation who helps to keep the St. Jims and Greyfriars flags flying.

PARRATT, C. JAMES

99, Compton Buildings, Goswell Road, London, E.C.1.

Age 33. Groups 5(a), 7, 6(a), 8 (Thriller), 5(a).

PARKS, JOSEPH

2 Irvin Avenue, Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorkshire.

Groups 1, 2, 3.

Helps to keep the hobby of story paper collecting with the "Collector's Miscellany."

PETTINGELL, FRANK

Highfield Lodge, Wise Lane, London, N.W.7.

Age 58. Groups 1, 2, 3.

Still in search of historical stories in $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Marvels, Plucks, Union Jacks, and similar papers.

PICK, ROBERT

3 Stonegate Grove, Leeds, 7.

Age 50. Group 5(a) (b) (d) (c) (e).

Would like any Gems or Magnets from 1939. Enjoys reading and would be willing to pay for the loan to anyone prepared to lend who does not wish to sell.

* POUND (Rev.) A. G.

St. Paul's Vicarage, 68 Finmore Road, Birmingham, 9.

Age 47. Groups 5(e) (a) (b) (c).

Clergyman, previously school-teacher, M.A. (Birmingham and Oxford). Recognises Charles Hamilton's genius. Recently started collecting. Desires to obtain complete set of Holiday Annuals, also specimen copies of early Magnets, Gems, Plucks, especially double (or Christmas) numbers containing Hamilton stories.

PRIME, BERNARD

43 Mayfield Road, Sanderstead, Surrey.

Age 48. Group 5(a) (b).

Particularly wants Magnets 336 and 337, and Gem 332. Has a great affection for red-covered Magnets and blue-covered Gems.

PUCKRIN, THOMAS W.

16 Willows Road, Middlesbrough, Yorkshire.

Groups 2, 5(a) (b). (93)

* READER, D.

141 Heathfield Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, 19.

Groups 5(a) (b) (e) (d), 6(c), 7.

Collection consists mainly of Magnets from 1932 onwards, also 50 S.O.L's, 100 Gems and 10 Holiday Annuals. Has been collecting three years but had to discontinue through joining R.A.F., from which he will be demobbed February 1950. Then recommencing civilian job - advertising. Would like to obtain Magnets between 1925 and 1930. Also Detective Weeklies of any date.

* REYNOLDS, JOHN E.

21 Clegg Street, Eccles, Manchester.

Groups 5(a) (b), 8, 6(a).

Sports writer and author of Boys' stories. Staunch admirer of Charles Hamilton.

ROBYNS, JOHN T. ("Robby")

41 Friar Road, Brighton, 6.

Group. 5(a) (d).

Particularly interested in red-covered Magnets and would like to obtain one entitled, "Carried Away" and "Down on His Luck" No.226. Also Bunter Court series in the Magnets and early S. O.L's dealing with Greyfriars.

SATCHELL, T. G.

84 Ankerdine Crescent, Woolwich, London, S.E.18.

Age 46. Group 5(b) (a).

Has a fair number of blue-covered Gems and red-covered Magnets dating back to 1907. All in good condition. Would exchange for similar copies.

SHAW, JOHN R.

4 Brunswick Park, Camberwell, London, S.E.5.

Age 31. Groups 5(b) (a) (e), 6(a) (b).

Has now a complete set of Holiday Annuals, and a set of Gems which is almost complete. Of Magnets has now only the first 3½ years. Urgently requires Gems (new series) Nos. 16, 22, 43, 74, 99, 411. Also Plucks dated 1906-10 containing St. Jims stories, and stories about Tomsonic's Circus.

SHEPHERD, JAMES

1 Athelstan Close, Handsworth, Sheffield, 9.

Group 5(a) (b).

Particularly interested in red-cover Magnets and blue-cover Gems.

* SMITH, NORMAN J.

34 Waincliffe Mount, Beeston, Leeds, 11.

Group 5(a) (d).

Has at present a small collection consisting of about 100 Magnets and S.O.L's, but enjoys reading Greyfriars yarns. Is anxious to obtain S.O.L's numbers 355, 310, 261, 197, 307, 328, 410, 229 and any Greyfriars stories prior to 200.

SMITH, HERBERT A.

13 New Road, Scole, Diss, Norfolk.

Groups 5(c), 7, 8.

SIDAWAY (Mrs.)

The Rise, 84 Wenall Road, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

Group 5.

SIMPSON, CLIVE

Nidd Vile, 36 Boroughbridge Road, Knaresborough, Yorkshire.

Age 33. Groups 7, 6, 5.

SNELL, FRANK

Rathgar, 6 Chingswell Street, Bideford, Devon.

Group 5.

SMITH, PERCY

The Stores, Mumby, Nr. Alford, Lincs.

Age 48. Groups 3 (and Henderson's), 5(b), 7, 5(c).

Wants Henderson's Nuggett Library 261 Lion Lil. 5, 6, 10, 11, 20.

Wild West 33 numbers in first 100, 36 in second 100, 69 in third 100.

Aldine Dick Turpin 77, 138. Newnes Dick Turpin 1, 2, 3, 5, 19, 20.

Aldine Robin Hood 68, 80, 83, 88. Boys' Friend 3d Lib. 30, 38, 47.

Aldine Jack Sheppards 3, 4, 7, 8, 9. Aldine Buffalo Bill Lib.

150 numbers between 1 and 240 (1900 series), $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Marvel Jack, Sam and Pete tales, Pluck St. Jims tales. Wants titles of Aldine Buffalo Bill

Library (1900 series) 172, 173, 220, 221, 222. $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Gem No.15.

American Buffalo Bill Weekly 1 to 130.

* SMITH, JOSEPH

36 Langham Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Group 5 (a) (b) (d) (c) (e).

Just started re-collecting after a lapse of a great many years.

Has at present only a few Magnets and Gems. Would like to have more.

* SOUTHWAY, ARTHUR JAMES

P.O. Box 3, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa (late of Brighton).

Age 39. Group 5(d) - collects for record purposes only, 7,

5(a) (b) (c) (e), 6(a) (e) (c), 3, 4, 8.

Is anxious to obtain all S.O.Libs. in this order: St. Franks, Rookwood, St. Jims, Greyfriars. Numbers required: St. Franks 4, 27, 54, 56 and 120.

Rookwood: Any before 182, also 206, 262, 272, 278, 284, 296, 308, 317, 335,

341, 363, 389. St. Jims: Any before 180, also 190, and any between 222 and 293, and between 311 and 383, and 395 and 401. Greyfriars: Any except 219, 221, 280, 295 and 298.

Has some Nelson Lees and Populars for exchange. Has been in South Africa 18 months, and hopes to make a trip home in 1951 or 1952.

STRYPE, THOMAS S.

21 Cann Hall Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11.

Groups 1, 2.

Still in search of Henry T. Johnson's "Pride of the Ring".

SUDBOROUGH, ROY WALTER

27 Milton Street, Higham Ferrers, Northants.

Age 31. Group 5 (all), 6, 7, 8.

SUTHERLAND, PEARD

3930 W. 35th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Age 47. Group 5(b) (a), 3.

Still looking for Chums Annuals prior to 1899, Scout Annuals prior to 1911. Seeking various Gems and Magnets, mainly for years prior to 1920.

THOMPSON, GORDON

85 Deerpark Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Age 34. Groups 7, 5(a) (d) (b), 6(a), 5(e), 6(b) (c).

Anxious to obtain Boys' Friend Lib. St. Franks stories and a few odd Nelson Lee Libraries. Has about 700 Magnets and 600 Nelson Lees.

* TRAYNOR, J. RICHARD

BCM/Adventures, London, W.C.1.

Age 42. Groups 7, 5(a), 6(b) (c).

Anxious to obtain Nelson Lees 1-120 (old series), Sidney Drew's Ferrers Lord stories. Magnets 1908-24. School Friend (1919) 1-52. Boys' Magazine (1922) 1-50.

New collector. All treasured boyhood favourites destroyed in 1940 blitz. Help in obtaining odd numbers or complete sets of above greatly appreciated.

* WALL, WILLIAM ROBERT

26 Chase Road, Old Southgate, London, N.14.

Age 37. Groups 5(a) (b) (a) (d).

Is particularly interested in Holiday Annuals and has almost a full collection. Has a particular preference for St. Jims. Considers the characters more life-like. Would like to obtain the barring-out series, caused by Tom Merry being accused of theft.

WALKER, PETER A.

Chelsea House, Wick, Bristol.

Group 5(a) (b) (d) (c) (e).

WAINES, GRANVILLE T.

6 Burnham Road, Westcott, Nr. Aylesbury.

Age 46. Groups 5, 6, 7, 8.

Is always open to buy Double Numbers of any paper.

* WALLIS, CLIFFORD A.

64 Oakwood Park Road, Southgate, London, N.14.

Age 29. Groups 5(a) (b), 7, 8, 5(c).

Anxious to obtain, or loan, following early Magnets, Gems and Modern Boys. Magnets: All prior to 1931; Gems before 1933; Modern Boys before 1934.

WALSH, JAMES

345 Stanley Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool, 20.

Age 40. Groups 5(a) (d).

WESTON, GEORGE NEVILLE

"Holmwood", 25 Comberton Road, Short Heath, Kidderminster.

Age 48. Group: Any containing boxing items.

Particularly interested in the Marvel Tom Sayers stories.

WHITMORE, IAN

3 South Bank Lodge, Surbiton, Surrey.

Age 15. Group 5(a) (b) (e) (c).

Has a collection of 650 books, half of which are Magnets. Not bad for a boy of 15. Magnets required: Nos. 520, 1096, 1099. Also Gem 916.

WHITER, BENJAMIN GEORGE

706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22.

Age 44. Groups 5(a) (b) (c), 6(a) (b), 7, 3, 4, 5(a) (e), 8.

WHITER, ROBT H.

706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22.

Age 25. 5(a) (b) (c) (e), 4, 8, 6(a) (b) (c).

WILSON, ROBERT

100 Broomfield Road, Glasgow, N.

Age over 50. Group 5(a) (b) (d) (e).

This collector is a very busy medical practitioner in the heart of industrial Glasgow. He started his collection in March 1949 and by July had got together 650 Magnets, between 1000 and 1683, Gems 1220 to 1663, and all of 1917. 200 S.O.Libs. and 20 Holiday Annuals. Altogether a notable achievement.

WHORWELL, RICHARD

29 Aspinden Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.16.

Age 51. Groups 5(a) (b) (c) (d), 2, 3, 6(a) (b), 7.

Interested particularly in early Gems and Magnets.

WINDOVER, EILEEN

55 Avondale Road, Gorleston-on-Sea, Gt. Yarmouth, Norfolk.

Age 26. Group 9.

Wanted any copies of Schoolgirls Own (2d.), Schoolgirls' Own Libraries (4d.), The Schoolgirl, and School Friend. Also the Schoolgirl's Own Annual, and 1-13 of the Collector's Digest.

WOOD, JOHN PETER

"Nostaw", Stockton Lane, York.

Age 35. Groups 7, 5(a) (b) (d), 6(b) (a).

Requires Most Nelson Lee Libraries (old series) between Nos. 2 and 142 inclusive. Then nos. 149, 151, 153, 173, 175, 179, 239, 249, 266, 294, 31a, 316, 324, 328, 329, 337, 348, 403, 406, 427, 437, 479, 490, 494, 525, 541, 542, 560, 563, 566.

1st new series 21, 28, 32, 33, 40, 45, 46, 54, 159.

Has also a number of duplicates, all series for immediate sale.

Also numbers of the Gem, Popular, Monster and Schoolboy's Own Library.

WRIGHT, CHARLES

12 Ashburnham Place, Greenwich, London, S.E.10.

Age 44. Groups 5(a) (b) (c), 7, 3, 2.

* WRIGHT, OLIVE

12 Ashburnham Place, Greenwich, London, S.E.10.

Age 39. Group 6(a) (b).

Started collecting recently and had in August (1949) about 85 Sexton Blake Libraries and 52 Union Jacks.

* GODFREY, SIDNEY,

3, Winchfield Close, Kenton, Middlesex.

Age 39. Groups 5(c) (a) (b), 7, 5(d) (e).

HOOPER, H.R. (Add, Page 89),

Group 8. (Thriller Library).

Anxious to obtain Thriller Libraries by G.H. Teed and George Evans, also S.O.L's. 267, 286, 334, or any previous to 225, Greyfriars only. S.B. No.271, 272, 287, 615.

McGREEVY, D. (Add, Page 91).

Special wants. Nelson Lees (1d New Series), 48-50; Boys Friend Library (2nd Series), Nos.580, 583, 624 and 651. Hot-spurs 1936-40.

— THE END —

HOME - GALL, EDWARD R:

In all probability the son of H.B.Home-Gall, who, as Reginald Wray, was a prolific writer of boys stories 50 years ago. The son evidently follows in the footsteps of the father, for he claims to have written 25,000,000 words, some of them under the pen-names Edwin Dale, and Rupert Hall; as the latter wrote the early Colwyn Dane stories in the Champion. Some of his best stories were: "The Country of No Escape" (Triumph); "The Caravan Rovers" (Champion); and the "Mad Carew" stories (Triumph). Recently has written many stories for the Boys Favourite (Panmure Publications).

JOHNS, W.E:

Born Hertford, 1893. Served in Cavalry and R.A.F. Created the very popular Biggles whose flying adventures appeared in the Modern Boy and Boys Friend Library before the war. Now writes about the same character for Oxford University Press and Hodder and Stroughton. Lives in Scotland and is one of the best present-day writers for boys.



Robert J. Whiter
-49-

Consulting Room Chat

Being a report of a certain Winter afternoon's happenings behind the door of Blake's house in Baker Street. The title of this feature has been borrowed from the pre-war. Sexton Blake Library Editorial chat, with apologies to the Amalgamated Press.

By H. M. Bond

Sexton Blake, the eminent Baker Street criminologist, carefully filled his favourite briar, lit it with a spill, and settled comfortably in his saddle-bag chair.

"Do you know, Tinker," he said reflectively, "I have been thinking about all these people who have been writing up our cases, and I am of the opinion that they have made a very complex personality of me."

Tinker looked up from the thriller he was reading and grinned.

"Bit of a change for you, guv'," he replied, "this is the first time I have heard you speak of our publicity hounds."

Blake looked at him keenly, and then his glance wandered to the novel in his assistant's hand.

"Maybe so," he said, "but although I have not read all my recorded cases as written by my chroniclers, I am willing to bet that in many of them I have been just as much of a super sleuth as the chap in that blood and thunder you have there."

"Well," replied Tinker, "this 'blood' as you call it happens to be the latest by Agatha Christie, and a jolly good job she has made of it."

"Ah, Hercule Poirot eh?" questioned Blake, removing his pipe from his mouth and looking interested. "I have read a lot about that fellow, in fact I think the authoress has 'got something there' to quote a modern idiom."

"Well, of course, all these fictional 'tecs are a bit on the wonderful side when it comes to tracking down the guilty," remarked Tinker, "and in any case, from my experience I do not think any of them would last five minutes in this real world of crime."

Blake looked thoughtful.

"The trouble with MY chroniclers is that they make me more of a world traveller than a detective," he said, relighting his pipe. "Although I am very grateful to one of our old friends in particular for describing some of my foreign cases very vividly."

"Who was that, governor?" asked Tinker.

"George Hamilton Teed," replied Blake. "I have a bound volume of the cases he recorded for a paper called 'The Union Jack' about here somewhere, and it is about the only volume of my adventures that I have turned to regularly."

"Oh yes, I remember Mr. Teed very well," said Tinker, "he was a great traveller himself, wasn't he? I doubt if there could have been a better chap to have tackled the recordings of our tussles with Prince Wu Ling, as he was an authority on the Chinese character."

"He certainly made a good job of that adventure we had in 1926," agreed the detective, "I particularly liked his descriptions of that monastery where we first saw the advanced television. Do you remember it? He called it 'The Temple of Many Visions.'"

"I'll say I do," grinned Tinker, "I also recall another story he based on that narrow escape I had from the dragon."

Blake laughed.

"Yes, young'un," he said, "that was a near thing for you."

Tinker dropped his book to his knees and stared into the fire. The wind howled about the chimneys of the Baker Street house and roared down the flue. A spatter of rain sounded on the windows. It often happened that he and Blake would start discussing old times and it was on these occasions that he really understood what he owed to the detective, for on the occasion which they were then talking of, it was due entirely to Blake's resourcefulness that he owed his life, and similar instances on many occasions since crowded into his mind.

Blake spoke again.

"Mr. Teed made a good job of your first love affair too," he said with a smile.

Tinker looked up and sighed.

"You mean - Nirvana," he asked quietly.

"Who else?" said Blake, "which reminds me of my old friend Yvonne."

This remark made Tinker smile too.

"'Friend' is as good a word as any, I suppose," he laughed, "some friends she was too - my word, guv' - I nearly lost you there - remember?"

Blake threw a cushion at his assistant with unerring aim.

"My own fault, I suppose," he exclaimed, "I asked for it."

Removing the offending cushion from his head Tinker gasped.

"You have had some near squeaks in the past though," he joked, "I can recall a proper bevy of beautiful danes in your past life."

Blake nodded.

"Yes," he said, "but look at the self control I used."

"That's what YOU say," grinned Tinker, "and we only have the author's words for it, or at least the ordinary reader of your adventures has."

"Let's change the subject," suggested his master, "I was starting to talk of my biographers, not my love affairs."

"O.K." said Tinker disrespectfully, "but I guess it will be a job for you to forget Yvonne, Roxane, Olga, June and all the rest of the glamorous band."

Blake sniffed and changed the subject himself.

"Take Lewis Jackson," he said, "he did a good job of describing our meetings with the 'Mummer.'"

Tinker's face took on a more serious expression.

"I am still baffled as regards that fellow Kestrel," continued the detective, knocking his pipe out on the hearth and reaching for his tobacco bowl. "I am not at all sure that we have heard the last of him."

"Our fights with him were very unusual," remarked Tinker. "I wonder what has become of all his followers, particularly his girl friend Fifette Bierce."

"She must be nearing fifty by now," objected Blake, "so I doubt if he still has her by his side, although of course she was almost as much a pastmaster at the art of disguise as he was."

"I liked the write-up Mr. Jackson did about your brother Nigel," reflected Tinker.

"That episode is best forgotten," answered Blake quietly, "although I agree that it was an excellent attempt to give the real story of 'my skeleton in the cupboard.'"

"Your early days are not so well covered, are they?" asked Tinker, "I don't recall any stories of your adventures which have a bearing on the very first cases you had a hand in."

The detective exhaled a thick cloud of tobacco smoke.

"Oh yes," he exclaimed, "there were once several stories which told of my youthful days. Cecil Heyter was one of the first to tell of these. Do you remember him, Tinker?"

"I remember him for his masterly handling of the Lobangu and 'Spots' Losely affairs," replied his assistant. "And oh yes - of course - he wrote those stories about your days at Oxford, didn't he?"

"Yes," said Blake, "and he was also one of the first to mention my father."

Tinker looked interested.

"I'd like to hear about those," he exclaimed.

"You can read 'em up one day," answered Blake, "but I will say that only Heyter told the world that my father, Berkeley Blake, was actually quite a well known surgeon. It is a fact that dad had a world reputation. Not many people are aware of the struggle he had to keep the secret of a rather revolutionary formula out of the hands of a villain called Francois. Unfortunately, his reputation was ruined by a planned scandal organised by Francois and finally he lost his life trying to save the formula."

Tinker looked very interested.

"You mean that this fellow Francois," he said, "murdered your father?"

"Yes," replied Blake, "and Mother too. I was saved by a miracle."

"Well, thank goodness for that, anyway," exclaimed Tinker with relief.

"Yes," said Blake again, "it was entirely due to the faithfulness of dad's best friend that I survived. He was a Dr. Lanchester. I regret to say, however, that he too was murdered by Francois some time later. Many years later, in fact. As a matter of fact, I owe a lot to Dr. Lanchester. He taught me more of the medical profession than I learned elsewhere. I think it was through him that I succeeded in getting my M.D."

"Gosh," exclaimed Tinker, "you must have had an exciting life when you were young, governor."

"Agreed," said Blake, "but no more exciting than of recent years."

"Did you go to Cambridge?" asked Tinker, "I seem to remember one author saying that you did."

"No," said Blake, "I didn't go to Cambridge, I went to Oxford. Heyter was right, the other author was just making up. Not that it matters a jot really."

"I thought you would not go to both of 'em," said Tinker, "That would be asking too much."

"I went to a school called St. Annes first of all," said Blake, "and then finished my education at Oxford. It was there that I met 'Spots' Losely, you know."

"I've heard mention of it from Sir Richard himself," assented Tinker. "By the way, governor - what nickname did you have at school? I mean the name Sexton rather asks for a nickname, doesn't it?"

Blake laughed heartily.

"Well, I suppose it should, really," he said, "but I was not called 'Sexy' if that is what you mean!"

It was Tinker's turn to laugh.

"I couldn't think of a more unsuitable name for you, guv." he grinned, "but Mr. Jackson rather gave the game away in that series of stories about your brother."

"Yes," agreed Blake, "it was not until they appeared that it became generally known that my name is really Anthony Blake."

"Oh, oh, Antonio," chanted Tinker, and ducked as another cushion whizzed from the direction of his master's chair.

"Disrespectful young rascal," exclaimed Blake.

Tap, tap.

Further discussion was interrupted by a gentle knock on the sitting-room door.

"Come in," called Blake, rearranging his cushions while Tinker straightened his necktie.

Mrs. Bardell stilled into the room precariously balancing a large tray upon which a pot of tea and a dish of buttered scones rested.

"Thanks, Mrs. B," exclaimed the detective as the buxom housekeeper laid the tray on the occasional table by the side of his chair, "I can just do with a good cup of the stuff that cheers."

Mrs. Bardell straightened up.

"I 'opes as 'ow them there scones 'ull melt in yer mouth," she said. "That there baker fellow 'as a bad 'abit of leavin' stale stuff 'ere lately, the varmint."

"Well, I see they are toasted," laughed Blake, "So I don't suppose we will be too much affected if they are stale."

"Huh," snorted his housekeeper, "I wishes I could make 'em meself, sir. I don't know what the world is a-coming to. Wish I could get 'old of that bloke Strachey I'd-----".

"Hush," said Blake, "no harsh words now, Mrs. B. And no politics now PLEASE!"

"Huh," snorted Mrs. Bardell again, "I often wonders what my Bardell would have said about this blinking-----".

"Read any good books lately?" chimed in Tinker. "Here's a good thriller, Mrs. B."

He handed her the copy of "Crooked House" by Agatha Christie.

She looked at the cover disdainfully.

"Which I calls it a waste of time to read such tripe," she said. "Better if you eddicated yerself, my young feller."

Tinker grinned as he caught the book which the housekeeper practically threw at him as she stalked out of the room.

"O.K. Mrs. B," he called after her, "order me a copy of 'The Knockout' every week, will you?"

The only reply was another snort and a closing door.

"Same old Mrs. B." grinned Tinker, "no sense of humour."

"You should not tease her," remonstrated Blake, "she is a dear old soul and is worth her weight in gold despite all her funny ways."

"Which reminds me that she does not get much attention from the modern authors," remarked Tinker, skilfully turning the subject.

"Agreed," said Blake, pouring himself a cup of tea, "and neither does poor old Pedro."

At the mention of his name the great bloodhound lifted his head and looked at his Master Dolefully. He was sprawled on the rug in front of the fire. It was a dog's life indeed, his doggy mind thought. Nobody wanted the services of a mere bloodhound in these days of scientific deduction.

"Which reminds me of those fine stories of our adventures by Allan Blair," remarked Tinker.

"Ah, now you ARE talking," exclaimed Blake. "He certainly did give poor old Pedro his due. He had a fine style too."

"Brilliant," agreed Tinker. "Wish he were with us to-day." Silence ensued for some minutes as the famous pair disposed to the pile of buttered scones and the pot of freshly brewed tea.

As the last slice slid down Tinker's throat, he continued:

"What about Anthony Parsons?"

"A lot about that gentleman," remarked Blake. "He has done a fine job of work describing our adventures in India, I must say. But in the past I am rather sorry to note that he dwells more upon my affairs with the 'brass hats' than with the lower classes."

"Oh yes, that is manifestly the case," Tinker said, stressing one of Mr. Parsons' favourite words.

Blake frowned.

"Don't be quite so rude, young man," he said. "Mr. Parsons is a first class author, in fact I like him as good as any of the present day chroniclers."

Tinker looked more serious.

"Only my joke," he answered, "I couldn't resist that one."

Blake seemed to have failed to hear, and went on:

"I must remember to pop in and have a chat with him when I am down Hove way."

"Good idea," assented his assistant, "perhaps we could persuade him to adopt some of our friend Mr. Bond's ideas, eh?"

"Maybe," agreed Blake, "which reminds me, I haven't heard of that young man of late, in fact I think the last time was last Christmas when we had that extraordinary party here."

"Oh yes," exclaimed Tinker, "when we had dear old 'Splash' Page with us again. Wonder where HE has popped off to now."

"I believe he is down in Australia now," replied Blake, "working for Sydney newspaper, I think."

"Good for him."

"Yes, he'll make good wherever he goes - what energy the man has."

"Wonder what sort of Christmas we'll have this year," said Tinker changing the subject again. "Not so exciting as last year, I'll bet."

"Might be exciting yet," said Blake, "although I have no plans as yet we might be landed in a seasonable mystery - who knows?"

"Personally I'd like a nice quiet time by the fire," said Tinker. "We might ask one or two here and have a nice old-fashioned time. What do you say, guv'?"

"Well, we might make a start to arrange things I'll agree," answered Blake. "How about it if we ask old Couttsy and his missus, Venner, Belford and a few of the other Yard men - plus friend Bond and a few of his hobby friends?"

"I'd like to meet some of the lads of that clan," agreed his assistant. "that fellow Dolphin, for instance, and Harry Homer, Wilfred Darwin, Walter Webb and others."

"They certainly work hard on our behalf," said Blake. "O.K., we'll invite 'em all here. It's a good idea, young'un. And oh, by the way, I think I'll invite Mr. E. S. Brooks and our partner in crime fighting Nelson Lee and his assistant Nipper. How about that?"

"Good egg," exclaimed Tinker enthusiastically. "Whizzo idea, guv'!"

"I'd like Lee to meet Brooks for old times sake," said Blake mischievously, "it might make the latter forget about 1066 and all that, to say nothing of Joy."

"And if we could only lay hands on Waldo," enthused Tinker.

"Well, we might get him at that," said Blake, "it is on the cards that Waldo is always very near Norman Conquest and Mr. Brooks might be able to rope him in as well."

And so the two went on - planning another Christmas party that promised to be full of cheer and happiness. Full of friendship and good will. We shall not be able to give you readers of the C.D. Annual a picture of this year's affair until 1950 has dawned. So watch the pages of the C.D. monthly and you might be intrigued!!

Author's Note: The above fantasy has been written with the object of trying to bring the old Blake atmosphere back to life. It is sadly missing from current Blake material, as you all know, and we can only rely on the past for that personal and friendly touch that made Sexton Blake the popular character of this century. Some of the material used may be recognised by various members of our circle to whom I offer my thanks for information supplied. I must also ask the indulgence of those well known persons mentioned and hope that the whole effort will be taken in the spirit in which it was written.

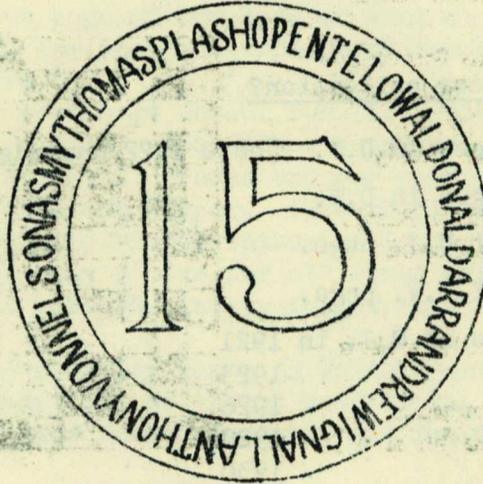
H.M.B.

WANTED: Magnets Nos.1 to 6, 90, 100, 106, 110, 164, 207, 217, 263, 264, 266, 273, 283, 288, 308, 309, 312, 334, 343, 377, 382, 393, 411, 413, 417, 429, 432, 439, 448, 449, 648, 664, 668, 672, 775, 880, 938, 941, 942, 943, 948, 955, 973, 974, 975, 992, 1064, 1069, 1074. Condition - good enough for binding desired. Would take volumes or short runs to obtain wanted numbers. Wm. H. Gander, P.O.Box 60, Transcona, Manitoba, Canada.

Advertise in the C.D.

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How many Blake-names can you find?



FIND THE AUTHOR - BY NUMBERS

A well-loved Blake author is hiding below. Spot him by tabulating the phrases in correct order. (Re-write the first nine letters only of each phrase, and a logical process will reveal him.)

Say how many black cats there were in E. S. Brooks' Eustace story.

Cynos had this number of sons.

Give Mr. Armitage his Secret Service Number.

A Council's membership.

A millionaire in a Plummer story.

A weekly feast would cost only --d.

A fine Ferraro story featured -- Buffalo Bills.

The favourite -- who wrote the Proud Tram Series.

Skene wrote of the man in this position.

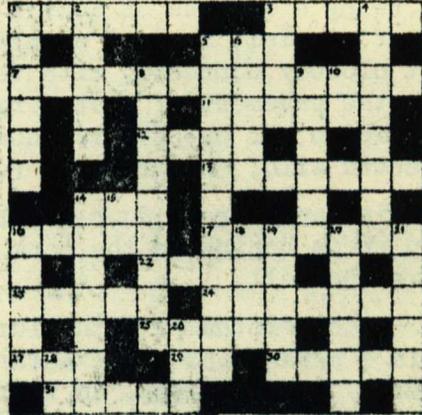
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Can any Fellow Collector oblige? Leonard Packman, 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

Advertise in the C.D.

SEXTON BLAKE CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Across

1. Parson's Pride.
3. Rather a rascally Prince than a princely rascal.
4. French friend from the Greek.
7. This one's vegetable, but Evans made it commit a crime. (9,4)
11. This name fitted both Hardy and Jones.
12. One-third of a Paradise Bird.
13. Whither Blake has followed many a Teutonic crook.
14. Used by authors.
16. Centre of my Blake collection (2,3)
17. Crook No.1 - middle name.
22. This servant has more than a yellow streak.
23. "Down came a blackbird," said F. A. Symonds.
24. Description of many a U.J. story.
25. Put 26 in the South East to find 22's creator.
27. First Blake author (Christian name).
29. Armchair Detective's initials.
30. Its pages carried a Splash.
31. Subtract the unknown quantity to find Sexton's alias.



Down

1. Fremlin, the winner.
2. Taylor's lost his tail and become female.
3. Vapoury character.
4. June's lost her head.
5. Add "Press".
6. Can a Voodoo Queen have a "Christian" name?
8. Paul Cynos had.
9. He inspected for G.H.T.
10. Hanson, not very loud.
14. R.S.V.P.
15. Initially, Murray was Drew.
16. Not very well-known Osborne character - but a bog shows the way.
18. Author of most S.B. stories till 1929?
19. Pierre, heving lost an E, is more mature.
20. Ten years of Blake.
21. Sexton's one-time rival.
26. Brookes, the artist, is short.
28. Initials of 25.

Looking Back

Some recollections of the old "Union Jack" written by

Wilfred Darwen

A few years before the war I spent a brief but enjoyable holiday in London. Being a devotee of Sexton Blake it was only natural that on the first day of my visit my feet should turn towards the one spot in all the world most closely connected with the great man himself, Baker Street. As I stood on the pavement of that very busy thoroughfare and glanced along the row of large and substantial houses, I thought of all the stories I had read connected with, and written around, its famous resident.

I studied each front door separately. I even glanced at the basement windows, perhaps hoping in the back of my mind to see the round, good-humoured face of Mrs. Bardell.

Many unacquainted with the lure of Sexton Blake, might smile at my interest in a person who never actually existed outside the covers of a story paper. Nevertheless, on that day I satisfied a burning curiosity to see for myself the street that, above all others, meant so much to me.

My interest in this great fictional character began at an impressionable age. I cannot say for certain how old I was when I first discovered Sexton Blake, but I know that I had already met other detectives less gifted. Dixon Brett and Tubby Haig were two that interested me for a time. Earlier than this I had been reading the exploits of Falcon Swift in the "Boys' Magazine". I still have a sentimental interest in this paper, and during the last few years have been collecting copies.

Actually the first Sexton Blake story I read was in "The Union Jack" No. 1131, entitled "The Pauper of Pengarth Castle". I have a hazy recollection of others before this, but am uncertain of the titles. The yarn I have mentioned featured Waldo the Wonder Man.

With characteristic insolence this fascinating character presents himself before Lord Pengarth under the borrowed name of "Sexton Blake". The story had a sequel which appeared the following week in U.J. No. 1132 entitled "The Curse of Pengarth Castle". Both stories were admirably illustrated by Arthur Jones.

The green and black cover of the second yarn was one of the most striking and original I have ever seen on the front of the old U.J.

Delving a little deeper into my Sexton Blake reminiscences, the next story I can remember clearly was a George Marsden Plummer yarn. I have read this particular thriller several times, and always with the keenest enjoyment. It cast the notorious criminal in his very familiar and colourful role of "The Hawk of the Peak". The theme of the story, a topical one at that time, was the Arab war in Morocco. This was in U.J. No. 1141 and was called "The Kidnapped Correspondent".

In course of time I read many other travel yarns, being particularly thrilled by Robert Murray's Confederation series. This author chose

different backgrounds to G. H. Teed, being content to settle down in South America or the remote islands of the South Atlantic Ocean. Here, in an atmosphere of steaming tropical jungle and ancient Inca cities he gave me many a thrilling hour's reading.

Typical specimens of the whole series are U.J. No.1138 "Into The Unknown", 1137 "The Yellow City" and 1154 "Buried Alive". These yarns did not follow any regular course but appeared at intervals of every two or three weeks. Between one story and the next other U.J. characters had a more or less regular appearance. One week a Zenith yarn, Plummer or Rymer the next, and finally back to the Confederation. In this way all tastes were catered for and everyone was satisfied.

Apart from the travel yarns I also read many straight detective stories. One or two were exceptionally good and certainly deserve some mention. U.J. No.1143, "The Great Waxworks Mystery" was written by popular Gwyn Evans. Most of the action of this story was centered in and around Colwyn Bay and Rhos-on-Sea, North Wales. A terrific fight between Blake and a criminal opponent in a graveyard at dead of night, is only one of the thrilling incidents in this action packed novel. U.J. No.1142, "The Negative Alibi", 1123 "Who Is This Man?", and 1069 "The Secret Of The Sarcophagus" are further examples of the first class straight Sexton Blake detective story. I could mention many more, all equally thrilling and each one complete in itself.

There was quality in the Blake story of those days. Then, one could always be sure of a first class yarn, and not second or third class as is so often the case to-day.

JACKSON, JULIAN:

Real name John Park Wilson. Born Glassford, Lanarkshire, 15th October, 1867, dies 10th March, 1932. Was a prolific writer of boys stories and his pen could hardly keep pace with his teeming ideas. For many years wrote for The Big Budget, Jester, Pluck, Union Jack, Marvel, Halfpenny Surprise, Boys of England, Boys Comic Journal, etc. Stories included those of Ras Pagan, the Hindu Detective, "The Giant Jap", "The Terrible Turk", "Priests of the Serpent God", "Mat Charwells Tutors"; serials in Bretts papers were "The Rival Giants" a tale of Britain under the Romans, "Owen Glendower, the Hero of Wales", "British Dick" and "Sam, the Yank", "Up-to-Date"; "Jack at School" and "Jack at Oxford". There was an amusing circumstance connected with "Up-to-Date Jack at School". Some years earlier Julian Jackson sent a story to Brett with the title "The Schoolboy Sombambulist". Brett returned it as unsuitable. (twice). Years later Brett asked the author for a school story to start "Up-to-Date Boys" Julian Jackson found the rejected manuscript, slightly revised and sent it along. It was accepted. Julian Jackson who was also a talented musician and for 26 years organist of Bridge of Teith Church.

When Rex Dolphin sent along the following feature he expressed some misgivings as to the possible reactions of Blake lovers who might consider it was poking fun at the Men from Baker Street. I think, however, that Blake himself would be amused at the allusions to himself and his assistant and I am sure that all readers will agree that although this is not strictly Blake material, it is a brilliant little skit by one of our most valued friends.

The Great Nylon Mystery

By Rex Dolphin

"Well, Ex-Inspector Filbert, of all people!" exclaimed the great detective, Puffin Pype, as I walked, dripping with fog, into his Baker-street consulting room. "Remember my old joke -- 'Filbert, you're nuts!'" A hollow laugh accompanied this hollow joke.

Puffin Pype, like all good private detectives, hadn't aged. Fifty years ago he'd started his career in the Puffin Pype Library; it was fully ten years since I'd last seen him; yet he still looked that standard age of about thirty-nine. His tall, thinnish, yet tough figure was as athletic-looking as ever. He still wore the same acid-stained dressing gown. And yes -- I swear he was still smoking the same old pipe!

And there too was Stinker, his assistant, sitting before the blazing fire. But he had altered. Years of dog-like devotion had given him a canine appearance -- but that's another story, and a shaggy dog one at that.

"Well, Pype, what are you doing these days?" I asked.

Puffin Pype puffed his pipe and shrugged. "Very little, old man. Modern criminals are so unimaginative. I'm working now on a new monograph. It's on juvenile crime, but I don't know whether to call it 'Crime And Crooners' or 'Sin And Sinatra.' But you have a problem on your mind, Filbert. Can I assist?"

"Why yes," I said, "I have a small problem, but I don't want to cut in on any important cases."

"Stinker," queried Pype, "what's on the books?"

Stinker looked in the engagement book. "The assassination of the Emperor of Biffbashistan, and the disappearance of a trans-Atlantic airliner, Chief."

Puffin turned to me and waved his pipe. "Mere chickenfeed, old man. Ten minutes' work: Now, what's your mystery?"

"Well," I said, "it's nothing very serious, but I would really like to know who strangled my wife with a nylon stocking."

"Ha!" exclaimed Pype. "A case after my own heart. As a matter of fact, your wife is the fourth woman to be murdered that way in the past month. Very intriguing, yes. Let's go."

The three of us left the warm chambers, found a taxi in the fog, and wormed our way to my prefab in the London outskirts.

Once inside, I pointed out to Pype the chalk-marks showing where I had found my unfortunate wife lying with a stocking tied around her neck.

"H'm," said Pype thoughtfully, "between the piano and the door, eh? And this is the stocking, eh?"

He fingered the now rather ruined nylon.

"Suicide, perhaps?" I suggested.

Pype shook his head. "Be logical, Filbert. She would have had to tie one end to the piano leg, tie the nylon round her neck, and the other end to the doorknob, and then kick the door to. After she had kicked the bucket, she would have had to untie the stocking from piano and door --- and fake these black fingermarks on each end!"

I looked at the marks, which somehow the police had overlooked with their usual stupidity.

Pype's eyes sparked. "Solved!" he cried. "These marks give me the solution."

I felt dumb, as always in the presence of the great man.

"Black Hand Gang?" I suggested feebly.

"No, no!" said Pype pityingly. "Be logical, Filbert! That sort of thing went out years ago. But you're near, pretty near."

"Perhaps it was me, Pype. Perhaps I have a split mind, or a guilt complex, or perhaps I am a psychopathic maniac?"

"You've been seeing too many psychological thriller-films, old man," Pype answered. "You ought to know by now that we don't get any of that stuff in the Puffin Pype Library. Plenty of clean blood, bullets, and torture --- but no psychiatry! Now, Filbert, what day is tomorrow?"

"Sunday," I answered, wondering what was coming.

"O.K.," said Pype. "Meet me in Petticoat-lane at ten tomorrow morning!"

Next morning, with my pockets carefully emptied for the occasion, I pushed through the milling crowds until I spied Pype. Tagging behind him was Stinker, very unsuccessfully disguised as a newspaper boy. His get-up was superb, but he was selling Saturday night's Evening Gazette. Now, had he been able by some Wellsian miracle to sell Saturday's Gazette on a Friday evening --- well, I would be working the pools, not writing my memoirs for a living.

Puffin Pype whispered eagerly to me, "I've found him, Filbert!"

"The murderer?" I gasped. "Where?"

"Over there!" hissed Pype. "Couldn't be anyone else --- Darky Dan, the dirtiest man in the nylon Black Market!"

"Amazing!" I said.

"Elementary!" he answered. "Come on, Filbert."

We approached Darky Den.

"Nylons, gov.?" whispered Dan hoarsely. Then: "Gawd, it's Puffin Pye himself!"

Pye grabbed his arm before he could slide away. "Come and have a drink, Dan," he invited.

In the pub, over an invigorating glass of mild and water, Pye asked Dan why he did it.

"Swelp me, gov'nor, but I had to. I could never stand ingratitude. And none of them dames could recognise a good bargain. I offered them fully fashioned nylons at five bob a pair, and they turned me down. So what could I do but strangle 'em and leave 'em the stockings as a free gift?"

"Exactly, my dear Dan. Now don't worry. All I want of you is a hundred pairs of nylons for a very special lady client of mine!"

"O.K., gov'nor. Come with me."

Dazed, I watched them get up to leave.

"Hey!" I shouted. "What about my missus?"

Pye turned, and with a pitying smile said: "Be logical, Filbert --- what can she want with nylons now?"

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MACRAE, HERBERT:

A versatile author whose work appeared regularly in various Boys papers.

PEARSON, ALEC. G:

A prolific writer for many years for Aldines, particularly True Blue, and A.P. papers. Created a number of detectives, including Royston Gower, Herbert Trickett, Frank Ferrett, Dr. Nevada, and Dr. Messino. Also used several pen names, including Captain Russel Scott, Bruce Howard, and Arnold Davis. As the latter wrote early Sexton Blake stories in the Union Jack.

SHAW, GORDON:

Wrote a series of stories concerning V-Bar-V Ranch, in the early days of the Champion. Also wrote "The Golden Trail". As S.S. Gordon, penned "The Bucking-Up of St. Esmonds" for the Boys Realm. Also "The Gentleman Tramp". Was also probably Gordon Wallace.

The Feminine Element

A Study of the women characters created for the
Sexton Blake series by the late George Hamilton Teed.

By William Colcombe

George Hamilton Teed had many outstanding qualities as a Blake author, perhaps the most notable being the way he brought women characters into prominence in the Blake saga. He was the first Blake writer to devise a series with a woman as the central character. The lady in question being, of course, Yvonne Cartier. Yvonne was an Australian whose parents had been swindled by a group of financiers and our young heroine is determined to seek revenge on these men. Aided by her uncle, John Graves, she sets out to ruin each of them in turn. As most of her activities are outside the law she soon runs foul of Sexton Blake. When, however, she has the detective at her mercy she finds she has fallen in love with the one man who was able to prevent her from fulfilling her vengeance. Blake, on his side, found himself with having more than just a warm regard for this young and beautiful blonde opponent. He however puts duty first and they remained in opposition until the end of the campaign of revenge. Later they became very good friends and Yvonne helped Blake with several of his cases, notably in connection with his efforts to assist Tinker's friend Nirvana. Yvonne also appeared in some of the early Criminal Confederation stories.

Nirvana, the young dancer whom Tinker knew in the days before he met Sexton Blake, was a tool in the hands of her elder sister Marie. Tinker at first tries to keep his attempts to help her from Blake. It is only after he has confided in his beloved gov'nor and enlisted his help, that he is able to free Nirvana from the influence of her evil sister and that unpleasant lady's crook associates. With Blake and Tinker's help Nirvana finds her long lost father and is set upon the road to happiness.

Roxane Harfield had much in common, as a character, with Yvonne. She was a French Canadian whose mother was swindled out of her life savings by a group of financiers. Like her predecessor Roxane sets out to seek revenge on the men who had ruined her parent, and like Yvonne again she comes into opposition with Blake and succeeds in kidnapping him aboard her yacht with the help of its crew. While her prisoner she succumbs to Blake's charm and tries to enlist his aid. Roxane was the central character in several series of stories. The first with her attempts to seek revenge and sees her in opposition to Blake, then came two stories "Blackmail" and "Shanghaied" in which an attempt is made to blackmail Blake after his being enticed aboard Roxane's yacht. This episode was followed by a long series in which Blake assists Roxane in her fight against the financial crooks who ruined her Mother. The last Wu Ling series to appear in the old "Union Jack" also featured Roxane and it is only due to Blake that she escapes from a most unpleasant situation. Lastly, there was a set of three stories that appeared in "The Detective Weekly". Roxane, after a long illness, in which a cure is effected by a Dr. Svenson, turns adventuress in partnership with Svenson and once more comes up against Sexton Blake. This series was never completed, probably due to Teed's untimely death.

"Union Jack" No. 1305 "Poisoned Blossoms" saw the appearance of yet another of Teed's female creations, June Severance by name. Whilst on a long trip out East, Blake rescues her from the attentions of an unpleasant crook, and with the help of his old friend Hong Loo Soo assists her to set up an antique shop in London.

In the story "The Tiger Of Canton" (S.B.L. 2nd series No.89) we find George Marsden Plummer, hitherto a lone warrior, acquire a female partner, to wit, Vali Mata-Vali. One time temple girl at The Temple of Eternal Purity in Canton, later the glamorous "Bird of Paradise" idol of the Parisian theatre-goer. Extremely beautiful, utterly unscrupulous, ready to follow Plummer and assist in carrying out the most audacious criminal plots, Vali was almost unique amongst Teed's female characters in that she didn't entertain any regard for Sexton Blake other than as a resourceful detective. She and Plummer made the most deadly male and female combination Blake and Tinker ever tackled.

Huxton Rymer's female partner, Mary Trent, first came into contact with him whilst serving as a housemaid at his "Professor Butterworth" establishment at Abbey Towers. He soon discovered she had other talents apart from being able to do housework. They soon teamed up together for the purposes of relieving others of their worldly goods. Mary Trent was never an out and out bad character and had many redeeming features in her make up. Her loyalty to Rymer was never in doubt, though it was at times doubted by Plummer before the days of Vali Mata-Vali. She was often successful in moderating Rymer's more ruthless methods and at times brought the best in him to the surface. Her high regard for Blake, both as a detective and as a man, was often resulting in friendly relations between Blake and Rymer, a notable example being detailed in the story "Sexton Blake's Christmas Truce" (U.J. No. 1105).

A character of a very different type was Marie Galante, the Voodoo Queen. A thoroughly unpleasant piece of work without one redeeming feature that I can recall. She was a High Priestess of the cult of Voodoo on the island of Hayti. She cherished something of a passion for Sexton Blake and her hate knew no bounds when he rather naturally didn't reciprocate. Huxton Rymer came under her spell for a time and they teamed up together against Blake.

Another young lady who joined forces with Plummer for a short while was one Muriel Marl commonly known as "The Gun Girl", a character straight out of Hollywood in more senses than one. Needless to say, their association hardly met with the approval of Vali Mata-Vali and there were verbal and physical clashes when the two did meet.

The last of the female characters to be created by G. H. Teed was Elsa von Kravitch, daughter of a Polish nobleman. Her death bed promise to her Mother to keep her father safe was extremely difficult to keep in view of his criminal activities. Her efforts to bring his nefarious plots to naught hardly met with his approval and only Blake's intervention saved her from an early and violent end. Blake sympathised with her in her difficulties and helped her as far as his duties as a detective allowed. Elsa's appearances were confined to the pages of "The Detective Weekly".

THE END

Lesser Lights

By John W. Gocher, Junr.

So much has been written about the "Big Name" authors who helped to immortalise Sexton Blake that one is inclined to overlook the lesser authors who wrote an occasional Sexton Blake story. Gilbert Chester, Gwyn Evans, G. H. Teed, John Hunter, Allan Blair and many other familiar names are known and respected throughout the ranks of Blake enthusiasts, but is the same respect given to David Macluire, R. L. Hadfield, Arthur J. Palk, Francis Brent and Bruce Chaverton who, in their way, were instrumental in helping the name of Sexton Blake to become a household word? Indeed it is not! But, on the other hand, there is so little known of the lesser authors.

Stawford Webber who wrote - to my knowledge - three Blake stories was heralded in the Union Jack with a fanfare of trumpets but, even so, his stories were not Blake stories in the full sense of the word. One had the impression that Blake was included as a secondary character in the same way as he appeared in John Brandon's stories. Who was Stawford Webber? Was it a pseudonym of an already well-known author? Or were these three stories - two in the U.J. and one in the Detective Weekly - his first efforts in fiction? Who can tell? Such details are buried in the dust of time.

David Macluire was a different type of writer. His stories were racy and crisp. His style was refreshing and he wrote with a verve sadly lacking in the present day Blake authors. "Crooks' Cargo" in particular was an excellent story. But of the man nothing appears to be known.

Arthur J. Palk was an Australian who was given permission to write up an account of one of Blake's Melbourne cases. It was a tolerable story well written and quite exciting, but Palk was never heard of again in connection with Sexton Blake. Maybe he continued his writing in Australia and, for all I know, is still there.

William J. Elliott - celebrated author of the Gunning and Royston Frere stories and best seller writer of tough thrillers - wrote a Christmas story in the Union Jack and one Sexton Blake Library. He wrote the Christmas story because Gwyn Evans was ill at the time and in a note the editor of that day mentioned that Evans had helped him with the story. In actual fact, Evans had nothing whatsoever to do with that story and the note was only inserted as U.J. readers had come to expect an Evans Christmas story. As Mr. Elliott told me, "the story was all my own work as the pavement artists say". Mr. Elliott wrote a book and dedicated it to Gwyn Evans' memory remarking that Gwyn would most probably have written the book in question a great deal better. Mr. Elliott was a man of many parts. He toured with a "Fit-Up" company - that inspired his theatrical book -, he acted on the films in the silent days - that inspired a book on film life - and even wrote a book on "Sex Life". I understand that Mr. Elliott passed away a few years ago, leaving behind him a long list of best sellers which are, from time to time, re-issued by Gerald G. Swan Ltd.

Norman Taylor who, to my humble knowledge, wrote one Blake yarn (U.J.1439), was well known in other fields. The Boys' Friend Library captured his stories, so, too, did other Amalgamated Press publications.

Clifford Gates, who wrote one Sexton Blake novel, "The Mystery of the Murdered Caretaker", wrote a twelve story series for the "Triumph" entitled "The Lost Ranger" in 1937 and, also, an article on model railways for Chums, but I can trace nothing else concerning him although he is an author for whom I have the utmost regard. The editor of the S.B. Library informed me, during the war, that Gates was in the Navy.

R. L. Hadfird was, quite recently, still writing adult fiction, while Barry Perowne who wrote an occasional Sexton Blake v Raffles story has completed published regularly in Britannia and Eve and also in American pulp magazines.

Perhaps the most neglected of the lesser lights is Gerald Bowman who wrote several stories with a somewhat bizarre setting for the D.W. He had style, writing ability and a flair for good characterisation and his stories were always of the type that must be finished at a sitting. He wrote one full length Blake novel and his work also appeared in the Thriller, Thriller 4d. Library and the Ranger. I imagine it is he who writes fast moving thrillers for publisher Werner Laurie. C.Vernon Frost, another author with one Blake epic to his credit, is still active, while Richard Goynne is, of course, active in the best seller class. His books seem extremely popular with everyone.

John Sylvester and Joseph Stamper - both "oncercs" - are active writers - Sylvester concentrating upon juvenile books and Stamper on romance. George E. Rochester, one of the most popular authors of boys' stories today, was another author who showed the greatest promise as a Blake story writer but was allowed to slip from the fold to the detriment of us all. Louis Brittany, according to a pen friend, was just another way of writing G. H. Teed, while Victor Fremlin's identity is a matter for conjecture. Of Francis Brent nothing appears to be known or suspected.

Anthony Ford, celebrated author of the Ranger and Boys' Friend Library, wrote one or two shorter stories for the D.W. when that paper began to print two stories weekly between about 105 and 140.

Edward Holmes, who wrote one long complete in the D.W., gained fame when selected to write a serial featuring Blake for the B.B.C. in 1940. Why an unknown was selected has never been made known, but it was an excellent play, far superior to those churned out at the moment featuring a certain Mr. Temple. Even the celebrated Ernest Dudley of Doctor Morrelle and Armchair Detective fame, wrote a S.B. yarn, teaming the master detective with Mr. Walker the Junkman and a very good effort it was at that!

Other authors who wrote occasionally were:- Roland Howard, Stanley Gordon, Frank Lelland, George Woodman, D. L. Ames, John Purley, Richard Standish, Derek Long, L. H. Brooks, Barry Linden, H. Townley, S. G. Shaw, Lewis Carlton, R. F. Foster, Stacey Blake, Michael Poole, Richard Essex, John Ascott, Paul Vickery, T. C. Bridges, Allan Maxwell, George Dilnot,

Hedley Scott and John Brearley, the last named in the Boys' Friend Library. What of these names, dear readers, can any one draw back the curtains of the past and throw some light upon the men behind the printed page?

S. G. Shaw and Stanley Gordon were, I suspect, one and the same.

SPRIGG, STANHOPE WILLIAM:

Born 1867, died 1932. Author and journalist. Educated Kings School, Worcester. For several years was in the provinces, editing newspapers in Sheffield, Nottingham, and Southampton. Then went to London in the early days of the Harmsworth and for years was one of the principal editors. Was also in the Daily Express, and represented the Standard in New York. Among serials he wrote for the boys papers were "The Mysterious League" (Boys Realm), "The Scarlet Horseman" (Boys Herald), and "Dirk, the Dog Detective" ($\frac{1}{2}$ d Union Jack). It is interesting to note that whilst assistant editor of the Sheffield Weekly Independent, he introduced Maxwell Scott to the editor of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d Marvel. Deserves a place in the history of boys journals for that reason alone.

STORM, MICHAEL.

Real name Charles Ignatius Sempill, M.M. Educated, Paris privately, and Perth University. Author-journalist, and publicist. Contributed to Windsor Magazine, Daily Mail, Evening Standard, and A.P. papers. Held many appointments in 1914-18 war, and Superintendent Police Kenya 1919-28, etc. Wrote "Brooks of Ravenscar", "Rope of Rubies", and "Captain of Abbotsway", for Boys Friend 3d Library. These stories were outstanding, and in more serious vein than the usual school story. Also wrote a number in similar style for Pluck.

URQUHART, PAUL:

Real name Thomas Cox Meech. Born 1868. Barrister at Law and journalist. Was editor of several newspapers. Also lectured on Parliament, Famous Trials, etc. As Paul Urquhart wrote a large number of Sexton Blake stories or rather it would perhaps be more true to say he partly did so for it has been stated it was a pen-name shared by two individuals writing in collaboration.

WOLFE, CEDRIC:

Created Kit and Cora Twyford, brother and sister detectives very readable yarns which usually appeared in Pluck. Wrote one or two Sexton Blake yarns into which he introduced Kit and Cora. Also wrote one or two serials one of which "Green as Grass", a school story, appeared in the Boys Friend (1909).

Monograph on Sexton Blake

By Harry Homer

The idea of writing this little treatise has been in my mind for a long time now, but as I add more and more to my knowledge of the great detective, so I have thought "Wait a while, you don't know enough about the subject yet." I have noticed that wishful thinking and the rose-hued mists of memory obscure in some articles the rather harsher tones of actual fact. For example, one reads quite often of the Nigel Blake series as if this disreputable relation of our hero had as many yarns devoted to his exploits as had to their's Dr. Huxton Rymer or Roxane Harfield. So one day I made up my mind to have a go at this series, although the "Detective Weekly" does not stand very high in my favour. In a short time I acquired them all - exactly four numbers! Yet the mental impact in younger days of finding Sexton Blake with a brother, a sister-in-law who called him 'Tony' and a nephew at Scotland Yard, had stayed with me throughout the years until I also thought the Nigel Blake stories were full many in number and covered a long space in time. But this is Christmas when much is forgiven and if I do not attempt too much detail in this monograph perhaps no harm will be done - and if a few angry letters are provoked then so much the better for the correspondence columns of the "Collectors' Digest"!

Firstly then - why Sexton Blake? Goodness alone knows there were enough rivals to tempt the pennies from our pockets in those gone and generous days. Well, mainly because he was a realistic character and a very lovable one too for those who got to know him well. They didn't have to send him to school to sell the magazines, nor invoke the sheer fantastic to put the stories over. In fact, many was the time when explanation was given as to the existence in real life of a phenomenon which was brought into a story. The invulnerability of Rupert Waldo to such things as heat and pain was illustrated by a real-life counterpart and one story, U.J.1277, "The Man Who Walked By Night!" by Gwyn Evans, was introduced and explained by an article from the pen of no less an authority than Professor A.M. Low, who wrote of "- this fascinating series of Sexton Blake stories -" and headed his article "It is not impossible".

The topicality of the Blake stories was well written of in the 1948 Annual by Maurice Bond and there is no doubt that credibility was much helped by this topicality. If Father talked well above one's head about "the amazing state of affairs in the Adriatic", it was most comforting to read a few weeks later "The Mystery of Fiume" (U.J. 846) and know that Sexton Blake had had a finger in the pie! And the politics of the actual matter explained with all veracity but in such simpler fashion than was the case with Father! If there was little attempt to build a character, as apart from a mere name, in the case of the other detectives, there would seem to be none at all in the trash which is put out these days. A nephew lent me some copies of a paper featuring a school called Red Circle and an automaton by the name of The Iron Teacher, along with a lot of other muck that any child might be ashamed to carry along the street for fear he might be mistaken for an imbecile. But not so Sexton Blake - as the years went by his character developed and grew in depth and stature; above all

can this be found in the work of such as G. H. Teed, Robert Murray and Gwyn Evans. "U.J." 204 dated 7/9/07 (when I was one year old!) introduces the detective simply as "He was a tall lean man, clean shaved and with a pipe in his mouth." His home rates only a mention, "He was ushered into the famous detective's consulting-room in Baker Street." In Egypt we find that "Nobody understood the art of disguising better than the detective and when he furtively slipped out of the hotel after dark his face and hands had been stained brown, a wisp of greasy hair strayed over his forehead and he wore ragged slippers, a flat turban and a robe and tunic, both much soiled." The final paragraph of the story finds him with a date to drink beer in Berlin with a German scientist friend!

Now let's jump ten years to "U.J." 726 dated 8/9/17 where we find a story told by Tinker in which it comes to light that "the gov'nor" enjoys a round of golf and a good cigar but stays strangely calm when both are afflicted by a temporary blindness. How different from Teed almost another ten years later in "The Tabu of Confucius" when we read that "- Tinker would never know the soft curse breathed by Blake as he saw that gallant young figure leave the jigger-gaff and plunge downward into the tuna and shark-infested waters which, even at that distance, seemed woefully far beneath." And at the end, after Tinker's subsequent failure and rescue - "But Tinker took it much harder than Blake had ever seen him take any previous disappointment and, had one been there just as the eastern sky grew pink under the first flush of dawn, one might have seen Blake, the austere, standing in the bows of the ship with his arm round the lad's shoulder. And if one could have listened one would have heard him say in extraordinarily gentle tones:- 'Lad, lad, because you are knocked out once is no criterion that it is going to happen next time. Wu Lung is somewhere on this continent and we haven't finished with him yet.' At the words, Tinker, who had been gazing moodily back over the waters of the Gulf, squared his shoulders. Then he smiled the lovable smile which revealed the gallant nature of the lad. 'You're right, gov'nor,' he said, forcibly but not elegantly."

That Sexton Blake had a tender side for the fair sex has been well brought out in the stories of Yvonne, Roxane and one or two more, but to me there was only one woman who ever meant anything to him and that was Yvonne Cartier. To those who put forward Roxane Harfield I would point out that the author was the same, many of the situations were similar and the girl almost identical but for the different name. Read the following paragraph:- "... these same men, together with the one now dead, had defrauded her and her mother out of the property which had been the sole legacy from her father... the shock of the discovery had sent the mother to her death..... the girl had set herself to prosecute a vendetta against these eight men..." and then "... frail mother had gone to her grave, her strength and spirit broken by the scheming machinations of the group of financiers who had swindled her husband out of a fortune and had not rested until the rich estate had fallen into their hands as well.....She became avenged upon the eight men who had swindled her father..." The geography too was changed - I have omitted from the above the location of the estates - one was in Canada, the other Australia; one girl was Yvonne, the other Roxane. Which was which? The first quote is taken from "U.J." 1432,

a Roxane story called "Black Spaniard Creek"; the second is from an Yvonne yarn "The Affair of the Tartan Box" in "U.J." 1109. But however tempted, Blake never quite fell, however near he might come to it. I believe that Maurice Bond found evidence to show that Blake was once married but if this is so, whether 'twould be better to uncover the horrid matter or let it rest in decent obscurity, I know not, although I have my own very emphatic private opinion! Blake was no prude, however, he liked the good things of life and he enjoyed good living too. One often comes across a glass of superb brandy following an excellent dinner while the occasional cocktail was quite in order. "U.J." 1047, "Huxton Kymmer, President", has - "He had been bound for the Venetia - it was just after mid-day - to discuss with Harry, the barman, just what cocktail he should imbibe, a process by no means as brief as one might suppose seeing that Harry was the most finished "Mixiologist" in Europe and carried in his head the recipes for more than three hundred palate ticklers. And, as Blake had had a very busy morning, he felt himself entitled to that mild indulgence." But no fitter man lived and in the first of the "Dr. Satire" tales one reads "...after his usual cold bath and brief course of physical jerks he sauntered into the sitting-room for his breakfast." A sportsman to his fingertips, we know him well as a very good boxer and a fine swimmer; he can ride a horse with the best of them and I have an idea that both he and "Spots" Losely got their blues for cricket when up at Oxford together, but am not in a position at present to verify this; can anybody help me out? It is not so well known that he is a football fan, but "U.J." 839 tells us that "Blake was a keen follower of football and he knew that Mr. Shald was telling the truth. 'I know that your club has had rather bad luck recently,' he said, 'I have watched several of their matches and I must say that your forward line is quite good but your defence certainly wants bucking up.'" Did Blake, I wonder, ever play football? Not so long ago I obtained from Herbert Leckenby a copy of a Boys' Friend Library "Blake of the Blue Crusaders", which was described as a "Footer and Detective Story", in the vague hopes that the Blake was somehow "the" Blake, but it was not so - alas!

But this is a Christmas Annual and what does Sexton Blake think of the Festive Season? In the "U.J." Double Number 737 we find him sending Tinker, full of remonstrance, on in advance and accompanied by Pedro, to a country mansion. This part of the story is written by Blake himself who comments: - "And it is only fair to add that I was keen upon paying the visit myself. Christmas with Sir Jimmy and his charming young wife promised to be extremely enjoyable. There were to be many other guests in addition and the party was to be a merry one." The Christmas Number a year later saw the first Waldo story which also featured Nelson Lee, Nipper and the Remove of St. Frank's - one can infer a difference in age between Tinker and Nipper here! The main setting is a circus one and the final paragraph reads - "... one invitation we accepted was to spend a day with a newly-married couple who were not entirely unconnected with circus life. (The story is taken from Tinker's Case-Diary and is narrated throughout by him.) Their Christmas was the happiest in their whole lives and ours was by no means gloomy. In fact we spent a really joyous time but I remember wondering, even as we sat round the blazing Yule log, how long it would be before we again met Waldo the Wonder Man."

No. 1000 "U.J." saw a famous Christmas - Blake robbed of his all by a Wu Ling combine of nearly all his best-known adversaries and going off in a faint by shock and over-work. Chapter Eight starts "No one - not even Tinker - ever knew of that collapse of Blake's." It ends with a memorable ride with Yvonne in the back of the Grey Panther - "'Masculine,' she murmured absently as she thrust her key in the door. 'Yes, he is that certainly, but he is not all masculine for there have been times when he has been as tender as a woman.' And her eyes were misty with unshed tears." Blake the fighter shows another side of his nature, he can hand out a thrashing to a roughneck Yukon trail-runner without turning a hair. ("U.J." 1177). The man has goaded Pedro into a fight to the death with his husky dog and Pedro has won but the man too has to take his punishment. At the finish, Blake walks away with the remark, "He'll come round in something like a quarter of an hour. If he wants any more, I shall be only too pleased to oblige him." But no calmness where Tinker is involved - touch a hair of that young man's head and you are in for very serious trouble. The same applies to the fair sex. In "U.J." 1038, Julia Fortune, his young friend of the Secret Service, has fallen into bad hands through a mistake by Sexton Blake, who goes straight to the rescue. "The gov'nor's seeing red," Tinker told himself, "And I don't blame him." The resulting fight takes four full columns of description - a full page and a third of another! Towards this climax we read:- "He was purely a fighting machine strife incarnate. For the time being he was made of iron. Unconquerable. The desperadoes who attacked him grew frightened at last. Of what avail was it to bite granite, to batter their heads against a stone wall? They were not, as he was, avenging an atrocity...."

But space gets short and we have strayed far from our Christmas. Without doubt it was Gwyn Evans who really brought Blake into the real spirit of Yuletide and that goes for dear old Mrs. Bardell as well. They were great stories and if I am ever fortunate enough to collect them all (I have only three just now and do not even know how many there were in all), I hope one day to make them the subject of a special article.

Why have all the old characters gone and none come to take their places? Why is the present-day Blake such a pallid figure and Tinker a flashy young wisecracker? Hamilton seems to have achieved a successful comeback (at 7/6 a time), what about some publisher having a go at reviving the glories of the greatest detective of them all - our one and only Sexton Blake?

WANTED: Union Jack No.1,000, 5s.0d offered. Leonard Packman, 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

WANTED: Billy Bunder's Bank Note, Billy Bunter's Barring Out, and Nessie Bunter of Cliff House School. Also copies of Schoolgirl, School Friend, Schoolgirl's Own, Schoolgirls' Own Library. Gordon Kirby, 55, Forest Street, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia.

Advertise in the C.D.

Answers to Quiz

Answers (20 questions):

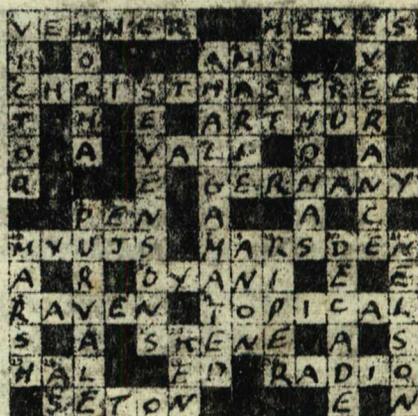
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. 28. | 11. Gwyn Evans. |
| 2. 24 | 12. 1531. Rex Hardinge. |
| 3. 7½" x 11". | 13. 48,000 words. |
| 4. 9¾" x 12¾" | 14. A skull with automatic pistol. |
| 5. None. | 15. May 1925. |
| 6. Detective Supplement. | 16. The Yellow Tiger. By G. H. Teed. |
| 7. Detective Supplement. | 17. Inside cover. |
| 8. Tinker's Notebook. | 18. Sexton Blake's Own Paper. |
| 9. True Crime Feature. | 19. The White Rider. By Leslie Charteris. |
| 10. November 9th, 1929. | 20. Lewis Jackson. |

SOLUTION (The Magic Circle)

If you can't get beyond 14, remember that both ANDREW and DREW are Blake names.

SOLUTION (Find the author)

1. G I V E M R A R M
2. A W E E K L Y F E
3. S A Y H O W M A N
4. A F I N E F E R R
5. S K E N E W R O T
6. T H E F A V O U R
7. C Y N O S H A D T
8. A M I L L I O N A
9. A C O U N C I L ' S



SOLUTION. (Cryptic Characters):

(1) Seminamis; (2) Kew; (3) Page; (4) Yvonne; (5) Julia Fortune.

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