

THE COLLECTOR'S DIGEST

No. 37 (Vol. 4) Jan. 1950 Price 1/1 Post Free

A
long
forgotten
Tom Merry
story



The teller of 10,000 tales

WHEN the news reached me that the old "Strand" magazine is going to die—like Julius Caesar—on the 15th of March my mind for some odd reason went back, not to Sherlock Holmes, Captain Kettle and the Night Watchman, but to Bob Cherry, Billy Bunter and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhangpore.

That, I am pleased to say, is the kind of mind I still have left after eight years at the Wick Academy, four at Redmond's Irish Division, two at London University and nearly 30 knocking about Fleet-street.

As an abject Sherlockian, surpassed only by Osbert Sitwell and Christopher Morley in my devotion to the immortal sleuth, it was, no doubt, naughty of me to think of Greyfriars instead of Baker-street when the announcement came through that the "Strand" was sentenced to death.

All I can say of my defence is that I had just finished a remarkable letter from Leonard Pockman, of East Dulwich.

Bessie, too

IN this Mr. Pockman, who is chairman of the Old Boys' Club, informed me that both the "Magnet" and "Gem" have been dead for a decade. The incredible Charles Hamilton, creator of Bunter, Inky the Nabob, Arthur Augustus d'Arce, Bolshoye, the bully, Wan Lung, the inscrutable Chinese, and Vernon Smith, the cad of the Remove, is going strong at 75 and still churning out fresh adventures for the anxious uterine of Greyfriars and St. Jim's,

For Hamilton was not only Frank Richards of the "Magnet" and Martin Clifford of the "Gem," but was Hilda Richards of the Girl's Magazine that told the story of Bessie Bunter, the unimpaired sister of the owl of the Bromley.

Today, Mr. Hamilton, who lives in Broadstairs, writes his literary activities by translating Dante, Cervantes and Goethe and playing Mozart on his piano.

So far, he has written over 70,000 words and nearly 10,000 stories—that leaves Bunter with his 500 novels far behind—and he estimates that Bunter alone has already earned over £100,000. Being merely the author Hamilton didn't get much of this and when the war came he had to live for a time in a barrel.

Time stands still

I'M glad to say, he is doing fine again. Bunter, you will be pleased to hear, is still emulating Cleopatra. Age cannot wither or perk nor stale his appetite. His postal order is still about to arrive. His purple little eye is still glued to Bob Cherry's kerbale and his command of the English language is still confined to such lyrical outbursts as "Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!" "Yow! Yow! Yow!" and "Yarrah! Yarrah! Yarrah!"

Though 40 years have gone by and half the world has come up in places since they first came to Greyfriars

and St. Jim's, Harry Wharton, Tom Meary and their notorious crew are not one day older.

In spite of Freud and Havelock Ellis sex has not yet reared its ugly head in these scholastic shades—though Figgins once touched the hand of Gussie's sister Edith at the annual cricket match—and so far as Socialism or even Liberalism is concerned Nalin, Shaw and Archie Sacklar have lived in vain.

What pleased me most, however, was to hear from Mr. Pockman that

the Old Boys' Club, which he and Robert Hoyle of Holloway founded last year, is thriving and has members all over the world—even in Iceland and Brazil. They meet once a month in a Wood Green tuckshop and swap old "Gems," "Magnets" and "Nabob Lees."

And they have an exciting coat of arms full of revolvers, pipes, masks, lenses and life preservers.

—And the bishop

AMONG them are famous authors, scholars, dons, Harley-street specialists, lawyers, head-masters, and at least one bishop. I wonder who the bishop is?

Isn't it a pleasing thought that in some episcopal palace every night after the day's work is done, the aceman settled and the decanter charged with amontillado there is a prince of the Church who is human enough to spend a nostalgic hour in the lamplight with the Famous Four and the Terrible Three, or listening over the widening gulf of time to Bob Cherry's cheerful voice crying "Hello, Hello, Hello, you fellows!" Billy Bunter squeaking "He! he! he!" or the Nabob announcing after he and Wharton have put on 200 for the third wicket that "The cheerfulness of the battalions is terrific."

Come Mr. Wilson

NOW that there is a little more paper to spare I hope Harold Wilson, who I am sure was a "Magnet" man in his youth, will encourage the publishers to open up Greyfriars again in a big way.

Charles Frank, Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest, Winston Cardew and Hilda Richards is still alive and the boys—and Bessie—are ready to pick up where they left off. "I say you fellows can you lend me 10s. I'm expecting a postal order—Ugh! Ugh! yow! yarrah! yarrah! yarrah!"

Time on Harold! Give the bishop a wee Christmas present.



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JANUARY 1950

Next Issue February

Editor, Miscellaneous Section

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

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

TO THE SCORES OF FRIENDS AT HOME AND OVERSEAS
WHO HAVE SENT ME CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR GREETINGS
MY VERY SINCERE THANKS

The End of an Eventful Year and a New Volume: I said last month that many things had happened in the year just closing, and that I had an idea 1950 would be not without its thrills. Of a truth, when I said it I didn't know the half of it. For take a load of this!

A week or two ago that brilliant columnist, Ian Mackey, of the News Chronicle, devoted his "Diary" to an account of some unique and interesting Clubs. "Clubs!" exclaimed that alert bundle of energy Len Peckman when he saw it, "Clubs. I know one Ian Mackey hasn't mentioned," and straight away he wrote and told

him about - well, you know which one. Well, what Len said in his letter evidently impressed the columnist with the whimsical pen, as will be seen from the "write-up" he gave it, reproduced on another page.

Well, a few days later Len received a pile of letters from Ian Mackey with a note saying they were about a tenth of those he had had as a result of Len's enterprise. For many days Len had a busy time replying to them. At the moment of writing this the outcome is not known, but the probability is there will be many new members added to our circle.

And that isn't all, not by a long way. On the eve of the December London meeting I received a copy of the Australian "Sydney Sun" sent by good friend Leon Stone. You'll see it, too, in this issue. I immediately sent Len Packman a wire so that he could inform the meeting the following day. Later Len set off to the Fleet Street offices of the Australian paper in quest of another copy - trust Len. Whilst there he was told the editor wanted to see him. Followed a lengthy interview which may mean the fame of the C.D. and the Club will spread across Australia. Not only that, but Canada may have a go, too. And don't forget something is happening in South Africa, also, thanks to A. J. Southway.

I haven't finished yet, for there's that "Leader" write-up. We heard just too late to advise you in the December issue that it had had to be postponed a week or two. It may have appeared before this, if not, I can advise you not to miss it on any account, for it's a joy to read.

Well, all that, and 1950 hasn't started yet.

And now a graver note. In our elation we must not forget that during the year two members of our circle have passed on - William H. Neate - and Joseph Baguley, who died so tragically just as he had settled down in Australia. In addition, that brilliant artist, Leonard Shields, known to all of us, died early in the year. God rest their souls.

"" "" ""

Fresh Territory for C.D. As will be seen from an interesting letter in the correspondence columns the C.D. now goes to Iceland, in addition to Canada, U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Eire, and Brazil. (Three soldiers at my office watch my mail for foreign stamps.) I can assure you Mr. Holtz is a real enthusiast who is very anxious to obtain Magnets, Gems, Nelson Lees, etc. As he will be at some disadvantage through being so isolated, I am sure all will help him if they can.

Mailing: All subscribers will get their copies this month in an envelope big enough to send it flat. This is something we have been trying to do ever since we started the C.D., for wrappers were never satisfactory, especially for those who wish to bind their copies. We hope we shall be able to keep it up. It will add to the cost a little, but it will be worth it.

And again health and prosperity in 1950 to all loyal supporters of our little magazine, and who cheer me with their letters.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

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WANTED URGENTLY: Top price paid. Gems 819, 878, 879, 946. Can any fellow Collector oblige? Leonard Peckman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

WANTED: Schoolboys Own Libraries featuring Greyfriars, 1/6 to 3/- each offered according to age. Bill Martin, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10.

WANTED: Sexton Blake Libraries, 2nd series, 171-723. Leonard Peckman, 27 Archdale Road, London, S.E.22.

B.O.P. ANNUAL: 1895. Excellent condition. Will exchange for Pilots, Duvals, Pluck, Chums, Bullseyes, etc. R. Southwood, 3 Spring Villas, Farnborough Road, Farnborough, Hants.

FOR SALE: Complete years of 1931, 1932, 1933 MAGNETS. Offers for any of these years to L. Peckman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

WANTED: "Billy Bunter's Bank Note", "Billy Bunter's Barring Out and Bessie Bunter of Cliff House School". Also copies of "Schoolgirl", "School Friend", "Schoolgirls' Own" "Schoolgirls' Own Library". Gordon Kirby, 55 Forest Street, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia.

WANTED: Union Jack No.1000. 5/- offered. L. Peckman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

WANTED: Gems, Magnets, Pilots, Plucks, etc. Name price. Any condition. Send to R. Southwood, 3 Spring Villas, Farnborough Road, Farnborough, Hants.

Advertise in the C.D. 1d. word. Name and address free.

NOTE.- When I read this article I said to myself, "Here's another find", and I am sure you will agree. Mr. Dubb has turned out a fine history of a grand paper which up to now has not had its due.- H.L.

POPULAR PAPERS OF THE PAST

No. 2 - "CHUMS". 1892 and Onwards

By Harold G. Dubb

September the 11th, 1892, was to prove a great day in the history of the boys' story magazine, for upon that date a new and important publication was born. The new venture was issued by the old established house of Cassell of La Belle Sauvage and duly christened "Chums." The first editor, a young London journalist named Mex Pemberton commissioned D. H. Parry to write the opening serial and this appeared under the title of "For Glory and Renown." It was an enthralling tale of the French wars, admirably illustrated by Gordon Browne, whose initial cover drawing of a horseman being attacked by a frenzied wolf, the man with arm upraised, a short knife tightly clutched in his right hand with which he is about to strike the brute while attempting to control his plunging steed with his other hand, was used for many years as the cover design for the bound annual volumes of the paper. In the early days of its life the format of "Chums" closely resembled that of the "Spectator," including two column pages and wide margins, an unusual departure in boys' papers and one that was destined to have an exceedingly brief existence; in fact, it ended with the first volume.

During that eventful first year, not a few famous names appeared in the "Old Paper" as "Chums" in after years was affectionately referred to by all true lovers of clean, high-spirited yarns of school life and adventure. Mex Pemberton's wonderful story of daring and danger upon the high seas, with Captain Black as its principal character, was issued in serial form under the alluring title of "The Iron Pirate" - a title to quicken the blood of any healthy English boy with the breath of the sea in his nostrils, the opening instalment being given in the number for week-ending March the first, 1893. A school serial entitled "Two" by Barry Pain was running at the same time. G. A. Henty came a little later with "Jack Dillon of Dunmore," E. Everett Green wrote "The Haunted House at Hoe" and there were also stories by authors as widely known as Leslie Charteris and

Arthur J. Daniels. All these tales were of an exceptionally high standard and each ably illustrated by such famous artists as Paul Hardy, Charles L. Potts, J.B. Clarke, and of course, Gordon Browne.

A notable feature in the arranging of a "Chums" programme was the desire to combine instruction with pleasure. Every week, articles on a diversity of subjects, ranging from a day in the life of a prison warden to how to construct a church steeple were published, while a whole page was devoted to "Olla Podrida," in which useful information such as the following was given:-

"It is reckoned that the shoe-leather annually worn away in the London streets is worth over £100,000."

"The Bank of England contains silver ingots which have lain in its vaults since 1696."

"A Spider eats twenty-seven times its own weight during the day," etc. etc.

With the closing of the first year of its life, a year in which the paper narrowly missed going out of existence owing to its poor circulation, Max Pemberton resigned his editorship and, in consequence, the next volume of "Chums" under a new chief, assumed a new shape. It was slightly smaller in size than hitherto and had three column pages identical with those of that other grand old paper, fortunately still with us, "The Boys' Own

Chief among the many fine things to be found in the second volume of "Chums" were the excellent short stories and a series of articles on famous men and women. These articles were based upon interviews granted to "Chums" special reporters by the persons concerned. These interviews covered quite a number of literary men, some of whom have since become household words. G.A. Henty, George Manville Fenn, Sir Walter Bessant and Sir H. Rider Haggard, are a representative selection as far as literature is concerned; Sir Arthur Sullivan, then the foremost living English musician, was chosen to represent his own profession; there were several distinguished explorers included in the scheme, while to the number of famous sportsmen interviewed there seemed no limit—C.B. Fry, the cricketer, T.A. Edge, the cyclist, Bubear, the noted sculler, W.A. Bencroft, the international soccer player, and many, many others, far too numerous to mention here.

"The Sea Wolves" by Max Pemberton, "Twixt Earth and Ocean" by Standish O'Grady, "Who and Why" by Ascot R. Hope, and

"Disturbers of the Peace" by Andrew Home were the principal serials in volume two. The illustrations in this volume were a considerable improvement on those in the first.

To begin the third year of its life many new readers of "Chums" were surprised to discover upon opening their copies the magic name of Robert Louis Stevenson and no less a story than his celebrated classic of adventure, "Treasure Island," newly illustrated by George Hutchinson, one of the most gifted artists of his period. There is no need for me to go into details regarding the plot of this famous yarn, for it has since become one of the most widely read books ever written. The task of supplying the second serial for the opening of the third year was entrusted to George Manville Fenn. The title he gave to his new work was "The Queen's Scarlet." It was a novel dealing with life in the British Army. It was afterwards re-issued in book form and is still read by chums, old and young, even today, fifty-one years after its original appearance. It gave a pretty convincing picture of life as a common red-coat in the time of Queen Victoria, exposing the hopeless ignorance of the men in the lower ranks of the army and how the majority were apt to misunderstand and bully any young recruit who happened to come from a respectable home and proved more intelligent than they.

A remarkable coincidence occurred in connexion with "Treasure Island." As the number of "Chums" containing the final instalment was going to press, the news was flashed to England that its author, R.L.S., had passed away. I give here the obituary notice which appeared in that issue of the paper:-

"Just before going to press with the present number of "Chums" - containing the final chapters of "Treasure Island" - the news of the passing away of Robert Louis Stevenson, in far off Samoa, is flashed to this country; and it is with deep sadness we realise that the incomparable story-teller is no more. Not alone is the world made poorer by the loss of the greatest writer of romance known in our day, but by the Master's death every one whom his magic pen has charmed will feel bereft of a personal friend; and with our sorrow will, we know, be mingled that of all readers of this paper."

In 1896, a young author named S. Walkey was introduced to the editor of "Chums" by the late Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and the result was a serial entitled "In Quest of Sheba's Treasure"

and an association which lasted for over thirty years. S. Walkey rapidly became one of "Chums" best loved writers. His stories were mainly devoted to the exploits of pirates, redskins, franc-tireurs and highwaymen. A few titles of works from his pen are as follows:- "Rogues of the Fiery Cross", "With Redskins on the War-path", "Phantom Jack", "King of the Outlaws", "Jack-a-Lantern" and "Crossbones Island". One of the most fascinating features in his stories was the speed at which his heroes were swept from one critical situation to another. At one particular moment a character would be tied to the stake surrounded by yelling savage redskins firing barbed arrows into his defenceless body while the leaping yellow flames of a circle of burning brushwood crept ever closer and closer; then, in the twinkling of an eye, he is rescued by the arrival upon the scene of a party of French soldiers, but, alas, only to be taken a prisoner once again. However, he manages to escape from them also, but only at the risk of breaking his neck by leaping over a precipice, to be saved from death this time by a convenient overhanging bush which breaks his fall. S. Walkey's pirate yarns were his masterpieces. For cold-blooded villainy, his pirate chiefs were incomparable. Robert Louis Stevenson's Long John Silver, Billy Bones and Blind Pew of "Treasure Island" fame were holy saints compared with Walkey's King Sol, the Black Rat and The Bat. To gain their own desires, these worthy specimens of the noble human race thought nothing of digging a grave and casting a still living victim into it, then gradually filling it in by discreet shovelfuls of earth at given intervals until the wretched man, in order to meet his death more quickly, divulged the whereabouts of the secret hoard of treasure the pirates were seeking. Almost all of Walkey's tales were afterwards re-published in book form.

With the passing of the years, "Chums" waxed and grew in tone and stature, increasing its circulation and always adding to its list of distinguished contributors. Captain Frank H. Shaw joined the paper round about 1912, giving to the world some of his finest sea stories, including "Sons of the Sea", "First at the North Pole", "The Secret of the Sargasso Sea", "Blackhand's Treasure", "Treasure Trove in the Southern Sea," and a host of others equally good. A real seaman, Capt. Shaw served on wind-jammers, merchantmen, Atlantic liners and also, during the war of 1914-1918, in the Royal Navy. A long apprenticeship of roughing it in every quarter of the globe gave him the material he needed for his stirring tales of adventure on the great oceans.

of the world. Few people have led more adventurous lives than the Captain and even fewer have the ability to describe their experiences more faithfully. All his works have an air of veracity about them and a real salty atmosphere, a sense of wind and water and the healthy freshness of the open air.

I have space here to mention only a few of "Chums" leading writers. Maxwell Scott, Herbert Maxwell and Alec G. Pearson came upon the scene between 1909 and 1914, Major Charles Gilson, Julian Linley, Winrove Willson, Gunby Hadath and Lt-Col. F.S. Brereton began contributing while the first world war was raging and continued to write for "Chums" until the paper was taken over by The Amalgamated Press in, I believe, 1928.

Lt-Col. F. S. Brereton wrote what I consider to be one of his best tales as a serial for "Chums." It was called "Scouts of the Baghdad Patrols" and dealt with the scout movement in the near East. It related how a handful of English lads began a scouting troop in Baghdad, gradually extending it until it had absorbed practically all the European boys in the city and included not a few native boys. Of course, as in all adventure stories, these youngsters braved numerous perils and had miraculous escapes from death, and in the sequel were instrumental in frustrating a plot to expel the British, bag and baggage, from Mesopotamia. There was something to be learned, however, from the story for the descriptions of Arab life and customs were very reliable as were also the word-pictures of the places mentioned in the narrative. I would thoroughly recommend it to anyone in search of a really good book of adventure.

What a pity it is that all the famous boys' magazines, with the exception of "The Boys' Own Paper", have disappeared from the market. Perhaps the youth of today have different tastes; I personally don't think they have, and I sincerely believe that were some enterprising publisher to found a new paper, similar to "Chums" with first-class stories and articles by well known contributors, it would become almost an instantaneous success.

No. 3 - "True Blue".

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FOR EXCHANGE OR SALE: Magnets, 12 copies 1931, others 1939;
S.O.L's 40, Greyfriars, St. Jims, St. Franks. L. Barnett,
2 New Street, Pittshill, Stoke-on-Trent.

WE WERE ON TIME AGAIN

By Herbert Leckenby

At 7-30 precisely on the evening of December 21st I picked up a completed copy of the Annual, and gave a great sigh of relief. We'd won through! I can say now that through circumstances, not directly connected with the Annual, there had been many dark days when I was haunted with a dread that I should fail to reach my cherished goal by Christmas.

You can picture then my delight when I saw those neat piles of Annuals all ready for mailing on the very day we had aimed for. It took eight journeys to the - fortunately, near-by G.P.O. By 8-30 we were clear, and the copies were on their way to all points of the compass at home and overseas.

And here I must pay a sincere tribute to Mr. Philip Wood and his staff for the untiring way they worked to help us win through. Many a morning during the last few weeks he had been at work at 5-30.

The mailing done I had a chance to run through a copy. Ooh! didn't it look good, well worth all the work and worry of several months. Yes, I think I could say we had done it again, in fact, bigger and better than ever.

On the eve of Christmas, as last year, I made a round of 'phone calls, mainly to satisfy myself that the copies had got through, and well, yes, also to learn if my opinion was confirmed. Yes, they had reached London, Manchester, Nottingham, Leeds. As for opinion, well happy was I as I listened to John Shaw's voice offering congratulations, and my spirits grew ever lighter as other voices came through the ether. I knew it was going to be a happy Christmas for me after all, with a bumper mail in anticipation afterwards.

Yea verily, I thought this even though I knew at the time there was another side of the medal. You will see from the report of the Old Boys' Book Club meeting that some of the members had an inkling there was to be a financial loss on the venture. Well, there is, and to be frank, the loss, when cost of posting, envelopes, etc., are taken into consideration is within a shilling or so of £11. That is if all the subs still outstanding, and there are a good many, all come in. (I can't credit anyone

going to let us down here). The loss is almost exactly the cost of those 20 odd extra pages, so if we had stuck to our original estimate we should have just got clear. But, I ask you, what could we have left out? That sentimental recollection of my boyhood, maybe, but that was only three pages. We certainly couldn't cut the Who's Who, Bob Blythe's work of months was blue-pencilled somewhat, but it would have spoilt it to reduce any more. The veterans would have been out in the cold without John Medcraeft's and my extracts from the "Bloods". No, as it was each group got its fair share. So you'll appreciate the dilemma I was in.

So what are we to do? Well, you'll see that the Club, characteristically, made a generous gesture. Would you think it a cheek if I suggested some of you may think the Annual worth a little more? If you do, I'll say "Bless you". If you think we made a bargain and should stick to it, well, I shen't think any less about you. Anyway, whatever the outcome, I shall have no regrets but have consolation in a job well done.

And so on to next year's. Let's make an early start. Bob Blythe already has his plan. Len, how about "They Came to St. Jim's"; Roger, another of your inimitable character sketches; "Rookwood Review"? Who will take that on? I am going to get down to a history of the Boys' Friend. I should like all the old hands at work again, and I'll also heartily welcome any newcomers. I am sure in this I have the hearty agreement of my colleague of the Blakiana section.

Just one other thing. A few regular subscribers to the C.D. did not order an Annual. If any of them would like one I would advise them to write straight away, for there are only three or four copies left. And the chances are that ere long this year's Annual will be a real collectors' item.

Later. Opinions are beginning to pour in; they are very pleasing to read, and very very encouraging. And would you believe it, in two cases they actually include order and payment for next year's Annual. That's indeed a record to be proud of. The poll, too, is going to be extremely interesting.

WANTED: Gem Christmas Number 1909, "The Terrible Three's Christmas Party". High price given. Dr. McCann, Bishopcourt, Navan, Co. Meath, Eire.

Old Boys' Book Club

Greenwich Meeting December 18th

Florest Blakians

Inclement weather did not deter a good attendance gathering at Charlie Wright's residence on the occasion of the December meeting. Even Harry Homer arrived from Sussex and he had his reward as on the Hoskins piano was a bust of Sexton Blake resplendent in all his glory. Charlie became the proud owner of the bust thanks to the endeavours of the live wire chairman, Ian Peckman. The exhibition of the bust together with Blake featuring rather a good deal in the very fine quiz composed by Charlie, it was the famous sleuth of Baker Street's meeting.

The chairman opened in his usual good manner and the minutes of the last meeting were read, passed and signed.

The secretary then gave the treasurer's report which was very satisfactory and was formally adopted.

Correspondence was then read, two letters of resigning members, one of appreciation from James Smith of Newcastle-on-Tyne on receiving his copy of Tom Merry's Annual, and many others too numerous to record here. The chairman then read out some of his correspondence, which included a telegram from the vice-president, Herbert Leckenby, stating that a fine article on the club's activities appeared in an October number of the Australian "Sunday Sun". Then the chairman read a letter from the "Leader Magazine", the article on the club will definitely appear in the New Year. When the magazine has finished with the photographs they will be sent on to the chairman, who will shew them to all who are interested.

The chairman then distributed copies of Thursday Dec. 13th News Chronicle in which was a good article on the club's activities. The chairman was suitably thanked for this great piece of publicity.

The chairman then undertook to write to the Amalgamated Press asking them to publish, in view of the enormous interest and publicity, a weekly paper on the lines of the "Popular" to

contain a Greyfriars, Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee story.

The chairman then enlightened the members on the cost of publishing the C.D. Annual, and it was agreed, after being proposed by him and seconded by Harry Homer, that a token payment should be sent to the editor to assist him in his very fine effort in producing this great annual magazine. This token payment to come out of the club funds. Furthermore, members were urged to advertise and support the advertisers not only in the annual but in the monthly issues of the C.D.

The aforementioned quiz was won easily by Len Packman with Ben Whiter filling second place.

The Annual General Meeting of the club will be held on Sunday January 15th, 3.30 p.m. at Hume House, 136 Lordship Lane, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22, when the election of officers will be held. All members are urged to attend this meeting and nominations for the position of officers are invited.

Two new members, Mrs. D. Marshall and Miss M. Asdourian were heartily welcomed. A Mr. T. Large, of Reading, joined as a postal member. This gentleman's main interest is in the "Captain" magazine.

The host and hostess, Olive and Charlie Wright, were heartily thanked for a very pleasant evening, especially the exhibition of the Sexton Blake bust.

Attendance: Len, Josie and Eleanor Packman, Olive and Charlie Wright, John and Mrs. Geal, Frank and Mrs. Keeling, Ian Whitmore, A. Blunden, Bob Blythe, Harry Homer, S. Godfrey, Ron Deacon, Marie Asdourian, Bob and Ben Whiter.

BENJAMIN G. WHITER.

WANTED: Odds and Ends, Boys' Friend Libraries, 3d. and 4d. In fact, anything. Henry J. H. Bertlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

WANTED: All back numbers of Collector's Digest. Also Annuals. Bill Mertin, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10.

WANTED for Collection. Magnets prior to No. 1890. Gems prior to No. 1000. Populars, S.O.L's, Holiday Annuals, Nelson Lee, Boys' Friend, Pre-war Champions, Triumphs, Hotspurs, Rovers, Pilots, Rangers, Adventures, Wizards and Skippers. Good prices paid. Books with school stories only. P. Willett, 67 Ford Bridge Road, Ashford, Middz.

The Nelson Lee Column

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

This month I want to deal with certain reprints and other stories by E. S. Brooks, a subject upon which I've written before but only briefly. Now thanks to Len Peckman and Jack Wood, I can give you the list of reprints in the Populer, and to Charlie Wright for the E.S.B. stories that appeared in the Boys' Friend (4d. lib.), in their entirety. At least it's possible with the Populer. There are still some more titles wanted for the Boys' Friend. Anyway, here goes with the Populer.

The Populer commenced reprinted stories of St. Franks with No.489 (9/6/28) with the story of how Reggie Pitt came to St. Franks. The originals being Old Series No's 170-177. Titles were: No. 489, How Reggie Pitt came to St. Franks; 490, The Serpent of the College House; 491, Pitt the Mysterious; 492, Ruotions on the River; 493, The Trail of the Serpent; 494, Pitt the Plotter; 495, The Rascal of St. Franks; 496, Pitt's Vengeance; 497, On Strike at St. Franks; 498, Sticking it Out; 499, Hendforth in the Toils; 500, Plot and Counter-plot; No.501, The Trepping of Nelson Lee; 502, Pitt's Final Throw; 503, Rascal and Hero.

That completes the Pitt Series and we follow straight on with the coming of Jack Grey as in the Nelson Lee. No.504, The Bermondsey Kid; 505, Proving his Mettle; 506, One against the School; 507, Mason's Uncle; 508, The Mystery of the Gold Locket; 509, Betrayed by his Study Mate; 510, Trouble Brewing; 511, Pitt's Sister; 512, Tried by the Remove; 513, A victory for the Monks; 514, A Midnight Adventure; 515, Hendforth's Little Mistake; 516, The Arabs of El Safre; 517, Saved by His Chum; 518, Captain Jim's Chance; 519, On the Trail of the Kidnappers; 520, Jack Mason's Dark Hour; 521, The Shipwrecked Schoolboy; 522, The Luck of the Boy from Bermondsey.

In the Populer, the next stories follow on quite naturally, telling as they do of Jack Cobly and the Removites in search of Treasure. In reality there is quite a gap (6 months to be exact, in the originals.)

These stories are reprinted from O.S. No's 213-220.
 No. 523, The St. Franks Adventurers; 524, Handforth's Record Ride; 525, Southward Ho! 526, At the Gates of Africa; 527, The Perils of the Forest; 528, What Happened to Handforth; 529, Into the Desert; 530, Foul Play; 531, The Treasure of El Sefra; 532, The Terror of the Desert; 533, In Merciless Hands; 534, The River of Fire; 535, The Wanderer's Return; 536, Shipwrecked; 537, The Peril of the Cavern; 538, Handforth's Romance; 539, Rescued; 540, In the Grip of the Sargasso; 541, The Sinister Sea.

Well, that's all the reprints contained in the Poplar. Now let's turn to the Boys' Friend. Some of these titles have been given before, but for the sake of completeness I'm giving them again.

Right! Boys' Friend 4d. Lib. 1st Series

No. 200; Canvas and Caravan; 504, In Trackless Space (reprint from an early N.L. Serial.) 514, Nipper at St.Franks; 568, Curtis of the Fifth; 633, The Idol of St.Franks; 649, The Green Triangle; 656, The Return of Zingreve; 657, The Wonder Craft; 704, Pots of Money; 709, Phantom Island; 713, The New York Mystery.

2nd Series: 105, St.Franks on the Rocks; 213, Grit; 253, The Golden Goalie; 257, The Cad of the Crusaders; 261, Boss of the Blues; 265, The Haunted Team; 269, The Vanishing Footballers; 277, Rivals of the Blue Crusaders; 435, The Schemer of St.Franks (reprinted in book form by Gerald Swan as "The Rotter of White-lands" by Reg. Browne). 439, St.Franks on Broadway (reprinted from Boys' Friend No.713 (1st Series), see above). 441, The Kidnapped Remove; 445, Waldo's Wonder Team; 447, The St.Franks Castaways; 451, Crusoes of Surf Island; 455, The Schoolboy Republic (reprinted from a Boys' Realm Series beginning with week-ending 1/8/25. This story, although complete in itself, is part of O.S. No.530.) 459, The Crook of Mosquito Creek; 619, The League of Bullies; 674, Buffalo Bill's Boyhood.

Brooks wrote all these under his own name, with the exception of 1st Series No's 200, 504, 568, and 2nd Series No.619, where he used his pen-name of Robert W. Comrade.

That's all the titles I have at the moment, and as far as I know they are all original except for "St. Franks on Broadway". There's plenty of scope for research in the Boys' Friend for titles, reprints etc., so if any of you are particularly interested in the Boys' Friend, what about an article from you on the subject?

Whilst on the question of other writings of E.S.B. and reprints, you may be interested to learn that there have been published by Gerald Swan three books entitled, "The School in Space", "The Kotter of Whitelands" and "Fortesque of the Fourth". These are all revised versions of stories written by Brooks which appeared in the boys' papers at various times. The first appeared in the Boys' Magazine in 1926. The second was a St. Franks story in the Boys' Friend (see above) and the third was the introduction of Augustus Hart to St. Franks and the original appeared in the Boys' Realm in 1921. All the novels appear under the name of "Reginald Browne". For this information I am indebted to Jack Wood.

And now to our monthly list of titles in the Nelson Lee Library. We're getting on. Only another 2½ years to go and they will be completed!!!

O.S. No. 311, The Hounds of the Targossa; 312, The Australian Wonder; 313, The Golden Image; 314, The Demon Cricketer; 315, Mystery Men of the East; 316, The Match of Destiny; 317, The Fateful Fiftieth; 318, The Brand of the Twin Stars; 319, The Test Match Triumph; 320, The Montana Mystery; 321, The Terror of Roaring Z; 322, The Rustlers' Secret; 323, Up the Ghost River; 324, Redskin Courage; 325, The Valley of Gold; 326, The Traitors of Caribon Pass; 327, The Fury of Thunder Rapids; 328, His House in Disorder; 329, The Mystery Footballer; 330, Playing for the League.

This month we come to the final list of the Series and now, if you have kept a record yourself, you have the Nelson Lee series in their entirety. It should be of great value to you when buying back numbers. Here we go then, on the last of the series.

2nd New Series: No's 116-120, Nelson Lee v. the Green Triangle; 121-128, Complete Detective stories; 129-140, St. Franks in serial form. Intro. James Kingswood as Headmaster. Also complete detective yarns. 141-151, Complete detective and St. Franks serial (Reprinted from 1st N.S. No's 20-25.) 152-154, Christmas with Archie Glenthorne; 155-156, Complete detective; 157-161, Nelson Lee and the Remove v. the "Fellowship of Fear".

Finish of 2nd New Series.

3rd New Series: Reprints of Nipper's Arrival at St. Franks (O.S. No's 112-126). 9-18, Reprints of Hunter the Hun series (O.S. No's 148-157). No. 19, Reprint of No. 8 1st N.S. 20-22, Complete original school story. 23-25, Reprints of the first three stories in the "St. Franks in China" series 1st N.S. No's 12-14.

This was the final issue of the Nelson Lee Library and the stories carried on as a serial in the "Gem" and a list of the series has been given in the August Number of the C.D.

That's all for this month, but I'd like to make an appeal for suggestions or articles that can be incorporated with this column, as I've pretty nearly run dry!

Next month, acting upon a suggestion from Jim Southway of South Africa, I'm commencing a list of all the serials that appeared in the N.L. with authors and start/stop numbers.

As this will not appear until January (although it is being written before Christmas) I'm a bit pushed in wishing you a Merry Christmas, so let me say that I hope you had a Merry Christmas. May you have a prosperous New Year and may you unearth huge stacks of N.L.'s, all at give-away prices!

Received as we go to Press:

AN APPEAL TO ALL READERS

I know my friend, our worthy editor, will be most reluctant to publish this, but I feel it is something which should be brought to the notice of every member of the clan. During a recent 'phone call I had with Herbert, I congratulated him on once again producing a really excellent Annual, published as I happen to know under most difficult circumstances.

During our chat he admitted that the publishing of this year's edition resulted in a loss of £11, due possibly to the extra pages and correspondingly increased typing costs. I am confident that not one of us desired Herbert to be a penny out of pocket, let alone such a sum as £11.

I think I am right in saying that the members of the London Old Boys' Book Club have already made a donation, and I am appealing to other collectors as well.

So rally round you St. Jim's and Greyfriars chaps, not forgetting St. Fran's and Blake enthusiasts, for it would indeed be a catastrophe if the C.D. or Annual went the way of the Magnet and Gem.

(Note: I am bashful about putting this in,

F. Clifford Beardsell.

but what I say in comments on the Annual holds good.

LETTER



BOX

Wermth from Iceland

Vesturgata 11,
Reykjavik, Iceland.
December 6th.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

I received your most welcome letter today, for which I am indeed obliged, and offer you my best thanks. Your solicitude in sending me the copy of November's Collectors' Digest is appreciated.

Thank you for outlining all that very fine information and addresses as to where I can apply for assistance in my efforts. I have already written to Mr. Packman and shall write to the others later tonight.

I may tell you that I am now looking forward indeed to receiving the copy you so kindly sent me. I trust you will write me down as a future subscriber, and with many thanks for your excellent cooperation, I remain,

B. D. HOLTZ,

=====
Frank Richards Recalls the Long Ago

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

November 10th, 1949.

Many thanks for yours to-day with the C.D. This number really is topping. I see that you have extended your borders: larger quantity with the same quality! I like very much the article "A Just Beast". I should hardly have expected any reader to give Mr. Quelch so much particular attention. To tell the truth, I have a soft corner for Quelch,

and it was a real pleasure to me to read so keen and kindly an appreciation of his character.

I was very interested to see that Mr. Brooks was 17 when he embled into the A.P. That was my own age when I saw my first publisher, but - alas! - a good many years before 1910, and before the A.P. came into existence! It is interesting too about the editor's surprise - whoever he was! That is another coincidence, for my first publisher's first remark was "You're very young, aren't you?" - which certainly was the case at the beginning of the nineties!

With kind regards,

Yours very sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

Frank Richards Must Possess the Elixir of Youth!

December 17th, 1949.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for the C.D., which having proceeded from good to better, is now going on from better to best! I am very interested to hear that the Bishop of Meeth desires to obtain that old Gem Christmas number. I do hope that it will materialise.

Thank you also for your letter to-day referring to the Comet. I have not seen this yet: but from what I hear, some old work of mine has been disinterred, and cut to pieces to make it fit.

Yes, I certainly should have told you, if I had been interested in the development.

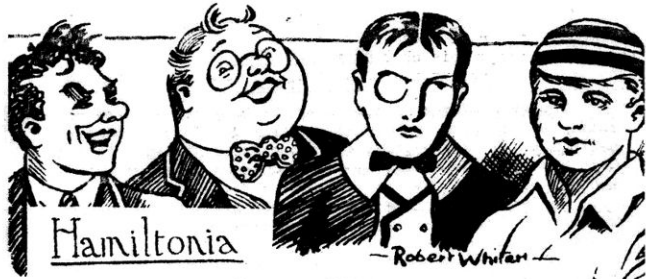
Do you recall my telling you some time ago about my new character, "Jack of All Trades"? It has been decided to issue this in book form, and the first book will be published early next year by Mendeville's. Next year there will be three of Tom Merry, one of Rookwood, and one of Cercroft; and, as usual, three Bunters. So you can guess that the type-writer is now fairly active.

Best wishes for Christmas, my dear boy, and all good fortune in the New Year, including another jump in the circulation of the C.D.

With kind regards,

Always yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.



Conducted by Herbert Leckenby

It's quite evident from my post-bag that the "Magnet" titles are wanted, so we are making a start straight away. I have to thank the many enthusiasts who volunteered to supply the titles, but as Len Peckman got in by a short head the task is his. We will get in as many titles each month as we can possibly squeeze in.

++++

Talking of short heads reminds me that in an amusing letter from J. S. Dixon of Liverpool he told me that just before the close of the "flat season", the Earl of Sefton had a horse running at Liverpool called Bob Cherry. It came in second at 10 to 1. I wonder if the Earl of Sefton is one of us.

And that's not all. Mr. Dixon also told me that a horse intriguingly named C.D. won at Kempton at 100 to 8!

I couldn't resist getting in these items of news from the sport of kings, but I won't make a habit of it.

++++

We are frequently being asked, "Why nothing about Rookwood in "Hamiltonia?" Well, it's up to you. Can you oblige, Ian?"

++++

And now for one of Charlie Wright's whimsical efforts followed by a very interesting press cutting from Australia sent by Leon Stone.

++++

THE GREAT HORACE

By C. Wright

The great Horace James Coker of the Shell, afterwards promoted to the Fifth, though how he ever got out of the Third beats me. He was a great character at Greyfriars, and together with his formidable Aunt Judy caused great hilarity in the old school.

He was noted mainly for his motor bike, his high-handed methods with the blades, his Aunt Judy and her hampers, and his short ways with fags.

The last named trait of Coker's caused him quite frequently to proceed to whop the Famous Five, at which times he was usually seized by five pairs of hands, whirled into the air and then deposited in an always convenient puddle, and Coker must have known every square inch of that puddle in the quad. On one occasion he tried to whop Wingate, but found himself looking up at the ceiling without quite knowing how he got there.

Horace with his stink box, as one irreverent junior called his motor bike, caused the death rate of chickens in the neighbourhood to rise to alarming proportions, and often gave him plenty of walking exercise through breakdowns. His high-handed methods of keeping the black sheep to the straight and narrow has often brought him trouble, and in fact Price of the Fifth once caused him to be unjustly expelled, but Horace James, acting upon his favourite assumption that schoolmasters have no sense, refused to remain expelled and came back again and again as grocer's boy, woodcutter's boy and tobaccoist's boy and finally conducted a one man stay-in strike from Study No. 1 in the Remove, almost driving Mr. Prout to distraction. This series brought the famous Aunt Judy to Greyfriars and caused Dr. Locke to mop his brow and mutter several "Bless my sculs", and after only one short interview, Mr. Prout, that formidable and mighty hunter of the grizzly, promptly locked himself in his study. However, Horace was cleared, Price was flogged and Mr. Prout once again devoted himself to the herculean task of trying to ram knowledge into this hopeful pupil.

Aunt Judy's famous hampers caused quite a lot of trouble at times, as Bunter quite often succeeded in annexing the contents of a large part thereof, which usually caused Coker to storm the Remove in great wrath, and after successfully stirring up a hornets' nest, usually finished up on his back in the Fifth Form

passage in a mightily dishevelled state, which often called forth caustic comments from Mr. Prout together with an imposition.

But in spite of his bull-headed ways, he was likeable and as straight as a die, and as one of Frank Richard's star comedians often brought the house down.

"MAGNET" TITLES

by L. Peckman

1st. Series

- No. 1, The Making of Harry Wharton; 2, The Taming of Harry;
 3, The Mystery of Greyfriars; 4, Chums of the Remove;
 5, Kidnapped! 6, Aliens at Greyfriars; 7, Rivals of the Remove;
 8, In Hiding; 9, The Nabob's Diamond; 10, The Captain's
 Election; 11, Billy's Boom; 12, Harry's Sacrifice; 13, A Jolly
 Half Holiday; 14, Billy's Competition; 15, Wharton's Operatic
 Company; 16, Stage-Struck; 17, A Jolly Outing; 18, Roughing It;
 19, The Greyfriars Challenge; 20, Billy's Treet; 21, The Famous
 Four; 22, Fun by the Sea; 23, The Greyfriars Riot; 24, Four
 on the Warpath; 25, The Triumph of the Remove; 26, The Grey-
 friars Sleepwalker; 27, The Reformation of Greyfriars; 28, The
 Remove Master's Substitute; 29, The Greyfriars Conjuror;
 30, Billy Bunter, Hypnotist; 31, Harry Wharton's Task; 32, The
 Greyfriars Ventriloquist; 33, Aliens Against Greyfriars;
 34, The Rival Schools; 35, Harry Wharton's Scheme; 36, The
 New Boy at Greyfriars; 37, The Greyfriars Chinese; 38, The
 Cheerful Chinese; 39, Greyfriars versus St. Jim's; 40, Billy
 Bunter's Raid; 41, The Rival Entertainers; 42, Harry Wharton's
 Day Out; 43, The Greyfriars Victory; 44, The Amateur Cooks;
 45, A Lad from Lancashire; 46, Expelled! 47, Home for the
 Holidays; 48, The New Firm at Greyfriars; 49, The New Sixth-
 Former; 50, Harry Wharton's Campaign; 51, Bunter's Vengeance;
 52, The Hero of Greyfriars; 53, The Greyfriars Seilers;
 54, Billy Bunter's House-Warming; 55, The Chinese Captain;
 56, Harry Wharton's Recruits; 57, The Ventriloquist's Pupils;
 58, Cut by the Form; 59, The School Dance; 60, The Greyfriars
 Cricketers; 61, the Rivals of Greyfriars; 62, The Shipwrecked
 Schoolboys; 63, The Greyfriars Picnic; 64, Wharton & Co.
 versus Merry & Co.; 65, Rival Scouts; 66, Stony Broke;
 67, Harry Wharton's Ward; 68, The Invasion of Greyfriars;
 69, The Bully of Greyfriars; 70, The Cliff House Party; 71, The
 Berring of Bulstrode; 72, The Greyfriars Photographer.

(To be continued)

Whiter is the much-envied owner of No. 1 orange-covered *Magnet*, dated February 15, 1908.

Bible-publisher Robert Blythe, 35, whose suburban home in Holloway was the scene of the meeting, read a paper about the Remove form.

Blythe owns 800 *Magnets* and every issue of *Nelson Lee* in its 19 years of publication.

Club co-founder Leonard Puckham said: "Some of the old magazines that sold for a halfpenny are worth up to £5 each."

In 1907, in the third number of the *Gem*, Charles Hamilton, using the pen-name Martin Clifford, began to write of Tom Merry's schooldays.

Next year in the *Magnet*, under the name Frank Richards, Hamilton wrote *The Making of Harry Whurton*, which began his tales of Greyfriars school.

All the stories of *Greyfriars*, St. Jim's and Rookwood College were the work of Hamilton, who poured out 1½-million words a year and earned an average of £2500 a year.

He became better known as Richards than as Hamilton.

Now 80, he rarely leaves his seaside house at Kingsgate, Kent, where he sits daily in a faded dressing-gown and velvet skullcap, short-sightedly tapping out on a typewriter, at 50 words a minute, more tales of Tom Merry and Harry Whurton, and stories of new characters *Turkey and Company* and *Flora and Company*, which come out three times a year as 7-6 novels.

For relaxation, widely-travelled linguist Hamilton reads Dante, Cervantes, and Goethe in their original form, and composes crossword puzzles in Latin.

Hamilton never had a son to provide first-hand color about school life. He is a lifetime bachelor.

Asked whether they would republish the *Gem* and *Magnet*, Amalgamated Press, London, declared: "We get lots of letters asking when they will appear again, but while paper rationing lasts it is difficult to say."

Sidney Sunday Sun
10th October 1949



HAMILTON
Crosswords in Latin

The Old Boys of Greyfriars in a reunion

OVER a schoolboy feast of jam tarts, cream buns and sandwiches, a group of middle-aged men swapped old magazines about their schoolday heroes.

Members of the Old Boys' Book Club were holding their monthly tea party.

They chatted about Billy Bunter, the unsavoury fat boy of Greyfriars, about Arthur Clive, the Hon. Arthur Armitage d'Arce and other characters in the *Gem* and *Magnet* and about intrepid detective Section, Plake and Nelson Lee.

Members say the club has founded all over the world.

When a paper shortage stopped the publication of the club's yearbook, members of the club...

Some of them had no recollection of Bunter's school of Greyfriars, and the meeting with Robert Whiter, of West London, and...





All letters, manuscripts, etc., to be addressed
to the Editor of Blakiana Section:-
H. M. Bond, 10 Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

THE ROUND TABLE

I would like to commence this first "Round Table" of 1950 by wishing all Blake lovers a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. During 1949 the C.D. has improved its position admirably. As far as "Blakiana" is concerned things have not always been as brilliant as they could have been owing to a great lack of support from my friends, but it is gratifying to know that our magazine is now reaching more enthusiasts than ever before and with the prospect of even greater triumphs in the coming year. But we are making a good start to the year in our own little section. In the first place, I have the promise of several articles from a lady enthusiast of Sexton Blake, to wit Mrs. Leonard Peckman of the London O.B.B.C. Her first effort, "The Story Of Nirvana" appears in this issue and I am sure you will all agree with me in saying that it is of a very high standard. In the near future we hope to print her second attempt which will, I think, deal with that wonderful character Dr. Huxton Rymer. How about you other lady Blake lovers? We will welcome your efforts too. Next month I shall present you with another fine little effort from Welter Webb entitled

"Blake's First Case", which will appeal to most of the older Blake fans as well as a lot of the younger ones. In the light of these new contributions (which are only two of a batch now in hand) I am holding over my own series "Sexton Blake and the First World War" until later, but will continue the lists of titles which seem to have met with a great success. I have received many letters asking for this series to continue.

A few readers have written to express their amazement in the recent revelation by Walter Webb that the Blake author "John Drummond" is actually John Newton Chance of "De Haviland" fame. In some cases there was definitely a tendency to disbelieve this, but I can assure the correspondents that it is indeed a fact. Walter has left no stone unturned to verify the whole affair and it is from the Amalgamated Press themselves that comes the definite statement. I did not think that it was possible myself, in fact I openly told you so in my November chat. I thought that there was another John Drummond. If there were two that we knew, then I thought it quite on the cards that there was another we did NOT know. I was wrong and one or two others were right. Methinks the A.P. could give us a lot of surprising information on Blake authors if they chose!

I am glad to see that the current S.B.L. titles are more in keeping with old styles. Gone is that annoying blue strip with the title in a red circle. It only needs the return of the author's name on the cover to complete the old appearance again. This return to the old style also gives E. R. Parker a better chance to illustrate. But wouldn't it be good to see those inside heading illustrations again? Even the new "Oracle" and "Miracle" Libraries have them as well as the companion "Schoolgirls' Own Library". When magazines are allowed more paper (very soon now) let us hope that the S.B.L. will benefit. We want more pages, but we still want that double column!

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THE STORY OF NIRVANA

By Josephine Peckman

As this is my first venture into the field as a writer I hope any errors will be overlooked in my endeavour to relate the "Story of Nirvana".

Some of our "Sexton Blake" fans are rather inclined to ridicule the stories in the "Union Jack" dealing with the affairs of Tinker and Nirvana, but for myself, being at a young and

impressionable age when I first read these yarns, way back in 1925, I must admit they were great favourites of mine, and I can remember at the time regretting very deeply that nothing more was ever heard of Nirvana and her immediate associates Marie and Phillip the Fox.

The whole series only ran to thirteen numbers spread over the period from October 1925 to December 1926 and were written by that very famous author of so many Sexton Blake yarns, George Hamilton Teed, and were set against the background of some quite exciting adventures, many of which led Sexton Blake and Tinker to different parts of the Continent.

In No. 1149 the series commenced with the affair of the Duchess of Rayland's Diamond Necklace which had been stolen by Nirvana. A short prologue gave an episode in Tinker's early boyhood when he first met Nirvana, then a small child trained as a pickpocket by her elder sister Marie. Years later, when Nirvana has become a famous dancer, these two young people met again, at the Ball given by the Duchess of Rayland, but Nirvana, still under the influence of Marie, steals the necklace, and by using Tinker as an unconscious ally, involved him in all the subsequent troubles. However, Tinker's one aim was to get Nirvana away from Marie, but unfortunately she insisted upon staying with her sister until she had solved the mystery which surrounded her parentage.

Tinker kept this affair a secret from Sexton Blake, thinking that nothing more would be heard from Nirvana, but in the next yarn, No. 1150, the activities of a gang of forgers are traced to Marie, Phillip the Fox and Flash Brady, by Tinker, and in order to protect Nirvana, he had to confess to Blake, but in the end Nirvana was allowed to go free.

The third adventure, related in No. 1156, took place in Sicily, that Island of deadly Vendettas, where once again Tinker met Nirvana, and armed with the knowledge that her associates were also on the island he was able to help Sexton Blake break the vendetta of the Belleme family of whom Phillip was a member. It was during this period that Nirvana realised just what Tinker meant to her, and that he was trying to help her break away from Marie, but always the urge to discover the truth about her parents was too strong and Nirvana stayed on with Marie.

In No. 1159, a very reasonable Christmas story, was the finding by Nirvana of her long-neglected mother and the brother she had never seen, but who had also been ruined by Marie, and under the name of the Tange Kid was well-known to the police. Marie

and her two unworthy friends did their best to fasten the guilt of a jewel theft on to Nirvana's brother, but here Sexton Blake stepped in and thwarted their plans.

From here on I feel I must just list the remainder of the series with just a brief mention of their titles and characters, otherwise the article will become too long and take up much valuable space in the "C.D."

No.1161, "The Mystery of the Painted Slippers", involved another of my favourite characters, Dr. Huxton Rymer, who, with Merie was on the trail of the painted slippers, in the heels of which had been hidden some valuable diamonds. No.1168 entitled Nirvana's Ordeal brings the first part of the series to a close, with Nirvana being able to devote herself to her mother, and then rather a long time was allowed to elapse before the first of a series of six stories appeared in No.1198 called "The Mystery of Room No.7". The stories concerned the efforts of the wealthy and unscrupulous Augustus Keever to get Nirvana into his clutches, but behind everything there lurked the sinister shadow of the mysterious Monseigneur X.

Each story was complete in itself, No.1199, "The Case of the Sheffield Ironmaster", saw Blake and Tinker in Sheffield and from there, in the "Affair of the Derelict Grange" in No.1200, they travelled to Cornwall, and incidentally the popular Yvonne then came on the scene, by offering to care for Nirvana.

In No.1201 Tinker, who had been sent to Palestine, was shipwrecked in the Adriatic, and through being rescued and taken to Venice, was able to help Blake once again to outwit Monseigneur X, and incidentally to rescue Nirvana, who had been prevailed upon by Keever to accompany him to Venice with the promise of revealing where her father was to be found.

In No.1202, "The Clue of the Two Straws", Sexton Blake, with the aid of both Yvonne and Nirvana, was able to clear up the scandal of the forged Rolonian Bonds by breaking up the gang of forgers and arresting Keever.

The final meeting between Blake and Monseigneur X occurs in Spain. The story of the Mysterious Monseigneur ends amidst the mountains of the little state of Andorra, but Blake was enabled to discover the true identity of Nirvana's father, and in the last episode of this series, No.1206, "The Adventure of the Two Devils", Nirvana and her parents are united, but only after Tinker's final efforts to get her out of Merie's clutches.

As I remarked at the beginning of this Article, nothing more was ever heard of these interesting folk, and I, for one, was

extremely disappointed that Marie did not get the punishment she deserved.

THE UNION JACK 9 1929

- 1316. The Gold Gang of Bear's Creek. (1) Arthur Peterson.
- 1317. The Croucher's Come Back.
- 1318. Presumed Dead. (2) G. H. Teed.
- 1319. The Case of the Ghost Ship. (3) Gilbert Chester.
- 1320. The Case of the Shrivelled Men (4) Edwy Searles Brooks.
- 1321. The Broken Melody. Anthony Skene.
- 1322. The Captive of the Crag (5) Edwy Searles Brooks.
- 1323. The Book of Death. (6) Gwyn Evens.
- 1324. The Case of the Hairless Men. (7) Gwyn Evens.
- 1325. The Number Woodyard Mystery. (8) Anthony Skene.
- 1326. Dead Man's Plunder. (9) Robert Murray.
- 1327. Are You Paul Cynos? (10) Robert Murray.
- 1328. The Foot of Fortune.
- 1329. The Flaming Trail.
- 1330. The Green Flesh.
- 1331. Grieved in Silver. (11) Anthony Skene.
- 1332. The Mystery of the 4 Buffalo Bills.
- 1333. The Case of the Bradford Dragon. (12) Gwyn Evens.
- 1334. The Mosaic Mystery. Gilbert Chester.
- 1335. The Case of the Devil Ship.
- 1336. One Hundred Years After!
- 1337. Exposure. (12A) Gwyn Evens.
- 1338. I defy! (13) Robert Murray.
- 1339. The Case of the Fifth Men. (14) Anthony Skene.
- 1340. The Riddle of Rurelong Bay.
- 1341. The Phantom of the Footplate. (15) Gwyn Evens.
- 1342. Cracking Walls! Merk Osborne.
- 1343. Some Persons Unknown.
- 1344. The Men in the Darkened Room.
- 1345. The Great Pyramid Swindle. (16) Gwyn Evens.
- 1346. The Shadow Man.
- 1347. The Jamboree Mystery.
- 1348. The Adventure of the White Salute.
- 1349. The Adventure of the Two Witnesses.
- 1350. King's Evidence. (17) Robert Murray.
- 1351. The Hand of Hungermere.
- 1352. The Gas Ring Mystery. (18) Reid Whitley.
- 1353. The White Hearse Mystery. Rex Hardinge.

- 1354. The Case of the 3 Black Cats. (18A) Reid Whitley.
- 1355. The "Mermaid" Mystery.
- 1356. Rogues of the Road.
- 1357. Terror By Night! (19) Edwy Searles Brooks.
- 1358. The Death Snare. (20) Edwy Searles Brooks.
- 1359. Retribution! (21) Robert Murrey.
- 1360. The Men Who Were Dead. (22) Gwyn Evans.
- 1361. The House of Eyes. (23) Gwyn Evans.
- 1362. The Gnomid. Gilbert Chester.
- 1363. The Mail Bag Mystery. Victor Fremlin.
- 1364. The Frozen Man Mystery. (24) Edwy Searles Brooks.
- 1365. The Mistletoe Milk Mystery. (25) Gwyn Evans.
- 1366. The Mesque of Time. (26) Gwyn Evans.
- 1367. The Judgement Men. Reid Whitley.

Key to Characters

- Krock Kelk. 1.
- June Severence. 2.
- Gilbert and Eileen Hale. 3.
- Rupert Welde. 4, 5, 20.
- Miss Death. 6, 7, 12, 15.
- Zenith the Albino. 8, 14.
- Doctor Setira. 9.
- Paul Cynos. 10, 13, 17, 21.
- The Gargoyle. 11.
- Spanish Page. 12a, 16, 22, 23.
- Ah Wo. 18.
- Eustace Cavendish. 18a, 24, 19.
- The Men Who Were Dead. 22, 23.

Next Month. "The Union Jack" for 1928.

Carefully keep these lists of titles. When complete they will give you all the information you need about the character stories in the U.J.
 Information re anonymous stories above will be much appreciated.

M. Stanley A. Pachon, 627 Hayes Street, Bethlehem, Penn., U.S.A. requires a number of G. A. Henty stories. Would readers with any to offer please get in touch with him?

Boys' books of yesteryear—world-wide interest fostered by a York man

IT would be difficult to find a plain Yorkshireman than Herbert Lockaby, of the Cavalry Barracks, York, particularly when he gets on to the subject of his hobby—old boys' books. Herbert, as he is popularly known among the several hundred men, women and children who share his hobby, is a recognised authority on it, and 1944 has been a really great year for him.

The year began with the great exhibition of boys' books from the early 19th century to the present day staged in the York Library. All the famous "bloods" were there from the first, Sexton Blake, Nelson Lee, Magnet and Hefber, and Maurice, with the Gen. libraries, through the "patriotic period" of Boys of England, Young Briton, etc. to the colourful comics of today. They and they aroused many delightful memories.

During the year too, additional collectors were added to the numbers of Herbert's friends with whom he keeps in touch, mainly through the pages of a monthly magazine published in York. Frank Richards, creator of Billy Bunter and the Chums of Greyfriars, of the immortal Gussy and the Chums of St. Jim's, of benevolent "Uncle Jimmy Silver and his pals of Rockwood, of the irrepressible Rio Kid, of the equally famous gits of Cliff House, and others has, numerous in addition, revived his heroes and histories in book form and produced many more in 1950.

World-wide interest

HERBERT'S magazine, with Maurice Bond, an ardent Welsh student of Bologna, as co-editor, has expanded its area, has put collectors in constant touch with one another whether in Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Eire or Iceland; has also investigated and solved many problems regarding the royalties of many famous authors. Even an Irish bishop, as well as several clergymen in this country, is an ardent reader and collector.

At Christmas each year, Herbert, and Maurice, with the assistance of many of their fellow-collectors, bring out an attractively presented annual, the third annual, just out, has a memorable cover depicting the boys' books of yesteryear—Boys World, Comrades, Boy Paper, Boys Herald, Young Briton, Union Jack, Boys' Friend, Pluck, Magnet, Gen, and others.

If you want to know which Magnets and Gens were actually written by Frank Richards and Martin Clifford, which characters appeared in the other comics, who were Sexton Blake's "lady friends," how the St. Frank's characters arrived, or if you have a desire to retrace acquaintance with the colourful Christmas number of your youth, the answer will be found on the 128 closely typed pages of this volume. And all arising from Yorkshiremen, Herbert's desire during the war is to do a little to relieve the hardship of warboard duties!

