

The  
Collectors Digest.

(Vol. 5) No. 51. March 1951 1/1 Post Free



No. 865. Vol. XVII. APRIL 7, 1909. PRICE ONE PENNY



# GREYFRIARS FOR EVER

By Alan Shadwick

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Now surely I know that voice? It rings a bell—a school bell. Hark how it comes echoing down the corridor of the years as I open this book in a shop in the Charing Cross Road. Is that you, Bob Cherry, and is it possible that you are still at school—you who were a boy when I was a boy, and long before that, from all accounts? I see that it is possible, for you were still at Greyfriars in 1948 when Mr Frank Richards put out this novel. But the stentorian cry that used to thrill me as the sound of trumpets now grates a little on my middle-aged ear. Put a sock in it, Cherry, while I recall the lineaments of that land of lost content where I never thought to come again.

For I was a Greyfriars boy. Indeed Mr Frank Richards surely created his school specially for such as me. He was a great educational benefactor who put his school fees as low as twopence a week. It was not much to pay to pass, if only after a spiritual fashion, straight from the streets of Lancashire to the lanes of Kent. The swaying tram might be grinding slowly but exceedingly surely towards a red brick school which was turning black in a district ironically called Greenacres, but with the twopenny magazine open on the knee (when it might have been more profitable to be glancing at a French vocabulary) one was wafted on a fragrant air to that brighter world "down South," as

Mr Priestley's Jess Oakroyd used to put it with such eloquent economy.

It seemed a world in which the winters were cleaner and colder, the summers hotter, and the autumns crisper than we knew them in the rude North. A jam tart in the Greyfriars tuckshop was not the same thing as a jam tart on the counter of a shop in Oldham. The latter comestible (one slips into the Greyfriars lingo) was somehow mixed up with mill girls at dinner time, or with high teas in the gaslight; but jam tarts and doughnuts at Greyfriars evoked the flash of white flannels and the merry sound of bat against ball; bicycle rides through lanes incredibly leafy, and even picnics by the sea. For if I remember rightly, we had all this and the ocean too. There was never a dull moment. How could there be, with Bob Cherry swaggering up and down the passages making that fearful row, and Harry Wharton continually punting a footer about in the quad, with all that bumping of Billy Bunter and ragging of Mr Quelch, all those booby traps and apple-pie beds? It was an active life. With the exception of a few cads, Greyfriars fellows were not the sort to frowst over a study fire on a half-holiday. Now, in the uproar of the Charing Cross Road, I feel the impact of that staggering morale. It is not quite forty years on, but those fellows show no signs of weakening. Flicking through the pages I find Bob Cherry suffering an unjust sentence of expulsion. Naturally, Cherry is innocent. "I'd rather be sacked than tell lies."

he says. Again, A fellow can't cheek his pater!" It is enough to make an old boy of the school take off his hat and stand for a few moments, in silence, even in a London bookshop. Now the young Lord Mauleverer emerges, like a noble peak amid the stormier elements. As usual, he is resting his aristocratic limbs in a deep armchair, and to hear him talk you would think it was the smoking-room in a club in St James's. "Mind shuttin' up, Skinner?" he draws. "You rather get on a fellow's nerves, if you don't mind my mentioning it."

But when Billy Bunter hurls a rolled-up newspaper and it catches Lord Mauleverer "under a noble ear," and the young nobleman cries out, "Oh, gad! What the dooce!" it is too much for me. It is altogether too much if I am to believe that he is still fifteen years of age. Nevertheless, I will buy this book, for there is one voice in it that does not ring false under the arches of the years. It is odd that the most grotesque character at Greyfriars should remain the most convincing. I'll have the book for Billy Bunter's sake. He was always hard up, hungry, and hopeful. Nothing has happened in the intervening years to cast a doubt on the likelihood of that situation. Summers are not so golden after all, and there is something to be said for frowsting over the fire on a beastly day. There is also something to be said for decent jam tart. Besides, what library is complete without a place for England's fat boy?



Vol. 5. No.51.

Price 1s.1d.

Post Free

MARCH 1951

Editor: Miscellaneous Section  
Herbert Leckenby

Telephone Exchange, Northern Command, York.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Half a Load off my Mind. Last month I referred to the paper crisis, and the anxiety it was causing me. Well, since part of the worry has been lifted, for we have managed to secure a consignment of paper for the C.D. sufficient to last us several months. Unfortunately, to put it mildly, there's a serious advance in price. I don't suppose you will be surprised to hear that, for it applies to all kinds of paper; some provincial 1d. morning newspapers, for instance, have gone up to 1½d.

Well, I am afraid there's nothing else for it but an advance in price of our C.D., reluctant though I am to say it. It either means that or a much thinner mag. each month, and I don't think anyone wants that.

Now quite a long time ago some of the London members generously volunteered to pay a subscription of 1/6 a month to

help things along, and several others kindly followed suit. This helped nicely towards reducing the somewhat heavy loss there was each month. Since, the circulation has steadily increased and the magazine was beginning to pay its way. Now we are faced with this. After serious consideration we have come to the conclusion that the only way out is to increase the price to 1/6 (post free). This would enable us to give a minimum of 28 pages a month, with, now and again, if supplies allowed, 32 pages. Further, by cutting out the picture headings, except on the first page, we could get in about another page of reading matter. Thus what it amounts to is that you would get your C.D. with no less reading matter than now, by the payment of a penny more a week. Is it worth it? Well, I feel sure everyone of you will say it is. You know me well enough by now to know this step would not have been taken unless it had been absolutely necessary. We don't want to do it until the last moment, though, so we propose to make the change with the May issue; we'll bear the brunt until then. Meantime I appeal to you to write and let me know what you think. I shall feel happier if I have your "Go ahead" as I am confident I shall.

As for the Annual, the situation there is better, for a proportion of the paper required was obtained before the price went up.

A Delightful Touch of Nostalgia. One of the finest articles ever written about Greyfriars appeared in the world famous and greatly respected "Manchester Guardian" on February 19th. We reproduce it, slightly cut, on the inside cover. It should make all Hamiltonians purr with satisfaction.

Suggestions Invited. It's only ten months to Christmas, so we shall have to be getting down seriously to the next C.D. Annual. Jim Southway, the man who never tires, has sent some good suggestions, and there's one from Eric Fayne in the "Letter Box". We want more, so get your grey matter to work.

Meanwhile, the latest Annual has reached Australia. Tom Dobson, of Brighton, Victoria, was the first to report. Says he, "I have already read it three times. It has exceeded my wildest anticipations."

Well, to make the 1951 edition even better is going to be a real task for a loyal band of helpers and

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LACKENBY.

Last Minute Flash. Reletive to the "Find a Name" Competition, have just received a very interesting and thoughtful article from Mr. Wheeler Dryden, of Los Angeles. It will appear next month.

SALE: Small Collection Magnets (1937,39), Union Jack, Detective Weekly (mostly Gwyn Evans etc.) 9d. each. Or Exchange for similar, or stories by Evans, Francis Gerard, Dickson Cerr (any publications containing). R. Wilson, 14 The Close, Lichfield, Staffs.

S.O.S.: Will Any collector assist Mrs. Peckman and myself to complete our joint collection of Union Jacks? Your price gladly paid for any of the following: 1316, 1317, 1313, 1292, 1272, 1042, 1040, 1039, 1038, 1016, 999, 998, 997, 996, 991, 989, 988, 987, 985, 984, 983, 982, 978, 977, 976, 975, 974, 972, 971, 970, 969, 967, 966, 962, 960, 957, 953, 919, 917, 911, 907, 903, 902, 898, 896, 890, 887, 886.  
Leonard Peckman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22

WANTED: S.O.L. Rookwood stories: - 6, 12, 20, 28, 32, 36, 42, 48, 60, 68, 76, 84, 94, 100, 104, 108, 112, 118, 124, 128, 132, 138, 142, 146, 150, 154, 158, 162, 166, 170, 182, 206 and 262. Would exchange for other S.O.L. Have 34, Greyfriars, 36 St. Jim's and 47 St. Frank's for exchange. Arthur J. Southway, P.O. Box 3, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa.

WOULD any Collector possessing Gems containing the Third Portrait Gallery (early 700's), also Second Portrait Gallery (616 to 636) kindly send me particulars of subjects treated therein. Arthur J. Southway, P.O. Box 3, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa.

500 NELSON LEES 1919, 1920 and 1923-1932 vintage for Sale, or preferably Exchange for pre-1928 Magnets and Gems. Also 20 Detective Libraries, 20 Diamond Libraries and 15 Nick Carters, all 1919-20. Any offers?. Charles van Renen, Box 50, Uitenhage, Cape Province, South Africa.

WANTED: Comets Numbers 85 and 116 to complete set of Greyfriars stories. Your price paid. Arthur J. Southway, P.O. Box 3, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa.

WANTED: Dreadnoughts 1st LARGE issue, single copies or sets. Any condition if complete. Henry J. H. Bertlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

THE GOLDEN ERA OF THE "LEE"

By Cedric H. Groombridge

To those of us on the creditside of 30 years of age, the golden era of the "Nelson Lee" must inevitably be the period between 1926-1930. The small series, prior to 1926, although more imaginative, were jewels to be collected and devoured in later years and so we confine our memories to the 9" x 6" copies which formed the First New Series - and what a wealth of memories they are.

Numbers 1 - 9 were original enough, as Mr. Brookes conveyed to all his readers definite proof of that which we had long suspected, that all were "Sports-mad at St. Frank's." We were pleased to read that sports should be considered a secondary consideration in that venerable old pile known as St. Franks, and in order to maintain that state of affairs a stiff "exam" was introduced to set juniors and seniors alike to "rights". At that particular time the Aussies were over here in England showing us how to play that noble game of English cricket and the Lee, very topically, introduced a more intimate interest by providing a Young England versus Young Australia "Ashes" theme. Needless to say, this, from the St. Franks scholars' point of view, clashed with the exams and it was no surprise to find that sundry popular Remove characters landed in the soup. Naturally one character just had to be poor old Handforth. However, in the last of that particular series we were relieved to find things returned to normal and with "Handy" making a triumphant come-back by "Saving the Ashes."

We were mentally congratulating ourselves for purchasing such a grand boys' paper when an even more sensational new series commenced in No. 10. With the kidnapping of junior Yung Ching by a Chinese millionaire named Dr. Foo Chow, the famous "China" stories started off with a "bang" - and obviously started the vogue for the kidnapping of Chinese juniors as seen in the 1930's with the Hamilton version of the kidnapping of Wun Lung in the "Magnet". The tables were finally turned on the villainous Foo Chow by the St. Franks juniors and, of course, the hero of the hour was our old friend Edward Oswald Handforth, who rescued Yung Ching against overwhelming Chinese odds.

It was not surprising, therefore, that Handy should be elected Remove captain on his return to St. Franks in number 20.

Fortunately for the Remove, his leadership lasted only until number 25, during whichtime black eyes seemed to have been the current vogue for the denizens of the Remove!

Number 26 introduced a variation on a theme of 1922 vintage entitled the "Communist School". The 1926 series reverted to a more civilised form of expression, "St. Franks on its Honour". The idea was very much the same in both series with the School being allowed to do as they liked, or rather, as far as its honour would permit. This schoolboys' Utopia was brought about by a new Head taking the place of the older Dr. Stafford. The new Head was somewhat of a "crank" as may be gleaned from the Honour scheme, but the idea was abruptly terminated through the medium of a gambling den born in the vicinity. Only through the efforts of the Remove stalwarts was disgrace prevented from descending on the School by way of a few schoolboys whose honour was not so very high. Ralph Fullwood, a reformed character in those days, temperarily reverted to a "smokey" type under the guidance of Forrest and the Cads of the Remove. Number 33 brought Fullwood the "light" and this story was the prelude to the usual annual treat - The Christmas number of the Lee.

Numbers 34 and 35 were chock full of all the things that go together to make Christmas, ghosts, haunted Towers, and buried treasure. With the arrival of Lord Dorrimore (a well-known character to older readers) No. 36 was of special interest. Obviously something was in the wind!

And so it turned out with the St. Franks party at the mercy of a gigantic gale in an airship! Another of Dorrimore's schemes, the idea had been to take a gentle flip in his new toy, an airship, but due to a sudden blizzard they found themselves plunged into the depths of the Arctic - landing in a country the replice of mediævel England! This series created quite an upheavel in the ranks of the "Lee" with a few staunch readers kicking about the fantasy of these yarns. I recall the Editor's Page at that particular time was devoted to protests by "Marlowe, Tibby & Co." who were not at all keen on the trend of "these fantestic yarns". The "Lee" seemed to improve in circulation as a result of Northestria (this second England) and they were so popular as to necessitate a return to Northestria in later years.

Mr. Brookes was undoubtedly a man of unusual imagination and schoolboy fiction lost a great writer by his lapse into detective yarns.

Number 34 began the "Great Flood" series, originality being the keynote once again. The bursting of the Ceistowe reservoir resulted in St. Franks being marooned amidst a great flood, with no masters in attendance. Handforth hit upon the idea of an Ark for escape purposes. Unlike Mr. Nosh he carried a cargo of St. Franks fellows and Moat View girls to safety in place of animals. I believe on second thoughts there were some animals aboard but only in the person of Willy Handforth's pets consisting of rats, snakes and so forth! This happy band of heroes sailed ashore in number 49, none the worse for their experiences.

Space does not permit much description of the following series, but mention must be made of the "Funk" series (Nos. 50-54) and the "Fresh Air Fiends" (Nos. 55-60). They were not, however, in the same category as the "Africa" series which commenced with No. 61. Lord Dorrimore put in another appearance and the boys were whisked off into the Congo. Captured by slave-traders and besieged by cannibals, it is no wonder that on their return they stayed "put" in England until No. 118!

Each series during this Golden Era was so good that it must not be considered that the series mentioned already were superior in any way to the following series. It would be unwise not to mention the famous "Alan Castleton" stories which ran in conjunction with the "Gem" in that period (No. 72) or the "Remove Rebellion" stories (82-89), but there was definitely one point of deterioration in this era. A School Train formed the nucleus of the disappointing portion of the Lee from 160-170. Possibly I am rather alone in this opinion, but it cannot be denied that the standard fell somewhat during this period. It was not until number 175 that things brightened up a little.

With this particular number we were confronted with a name very familiar to "Union Jack" readers - Waldo. The son of the famous ex-crook and Peril Expert, Rupert Waldo, descended upon the St. Franks boys and caused quite a lot of excitement with his phenomenal strength, eyesight and hearing. Like his father he was a holy terror! He successfully spoofed the deadly rivals of St. Franks, (the River House school) by appearing as a mild, inoffensive, bespectacled youth. It was not long before Brewster & Co. of the River House found that he was a wolf in sheep's clothing. This hoax finally over, Waldo found himself in trouble with the police on a theft charge. Luckily, everything was sorted out in number 178



and Weldo settled down to a normal St.Frenks existence and never seemed to hit the news again until 1933 when both father and son performed together in the last lap of the "Nelson Lee" existence.

Bernard Forrest, the Cad of the Remove, expelled in number 71, put in another appearance at St.Frenks as a new boy during number 179. Luckily for Forrest, the Head of St.Frenks was of a somewhat more tender nature than the previous Head and after the pretence was discovered, Forrest was allowed to stay and was once again inflicted on the Remove,

The Tu-Chen Tong (well-known to 1917 readers of the Lee) put in a brief appearance with No.183, but came to a sticky end in the 1929 Christmas number entitled "The Ghost of Trevis Dene."

The final First New Series "Lees" had Edgar Fenton, the School captain, as the principal character. He found himself with a real live uncle in the Remove, and apart from the humility of this experience, the "uncle" was an out and out bouncer. Implicating his nephew in a gambling club racket, this young rascal almost brought about Fenton's disgrace and expulsion. The final yarn, and the last of the series, number 194, succeeded in putting Fenton back on the pedestal where he so rightfully belonged, and with that happy note, St. Frenks faded out of the picture with the introduction of a "Second New Series" chiefly composed of detective yarns.

These new series, when they did feature St.Frenks again, never seemed to recapture the magic of the old St.Frenks adventures, and so ended for me and numerous other "Lee-ites" the heyday of the "Nelson Lee" and most certainly the Golden Era of the "Lee".

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WANTED: Magnets 1908-1930. Good condition. Offer exchange "Young Apprentice" Nos. 1-16. Ally Sloper's Comic Kalender 1879-1888. 3 Judy ld. Specials. L. Scagell, 24 Veda Road, Lewisham, London S.E.13.

NELSON LEES, Boys' Life, Schoolboys' Own, Boys' Realm, etc. for sale. Lees (old series) WANTED.  
L.M.Allen, 3 Montgomery Drive, Sheffield 7.

WANTED: Union Jacks (in good condition) issues during years 1920-1924 inclusive. Josephine Peckman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

Northern Section

The February meeting was held on the 10th inst. at 239 Hyde Park Road, Leeds.

Secretary Norman Smith's spade work had borne fruit, for there was a record attendance. Came Cliff Beardsell from Stockport, Harold Ogden from Manchester, and there for the first time was 16 year old Brian Honeysett who had travelled from his Lancashire coast home at St. Annes, enthusiasm equal to that of Fernborough to London young Roger Southwood. One had only to look at Brian during the meeting to see that he was enjoying himself and he assured me afterwards he would be coming again next month and other months to follow.

Chairman Reg. Hudson opened by cordially welcoming new members, and Mr. J. Breeze Bentley, one who was one of our first members but present for the first time and who was to make the speech of the evening.

The secretary read the minutes of the last meeting, and also correspondence, including apologies from those who regretfully were unable to be present.

Treasurer and Librarian Gerald Allison followed with his report, revealing a nice balance in hand and activity in the library.

Gerald read correspondence he had had with live-wire chairmen of the London Club, Len Packman, concerning the proposed visit to London at Whitsuntide of members of our Northern Section. Len had stated that London would be delighted to change their meeting to the second Sunday, May 13th, if our members did make the journey. It was therefore hoped that anyone interested would inform the secretary as soon as possible so that hotel accommodation etc. could be arranged.

Then came the event of the evening, the talk by Mr. J. Breeze Bentley, "Charles Hamilton and the Saga of the Magnet and the Gem".

The next meeting was fixed for March 10th, usual venue.

It was evident right from the opening words that Mr. Bentley is a practised speaker. He had the meeting in the hollow of his hand. When he had finished it was found he had been speaking for nearly an hour. No one would have thought so, so rapt in attention were they.

It was a fascinating account of the astonishing career of the maestro and the remarkable records of the two most famous papers in boys' literature. With keen insight he described numerous characters, and slipped in many a quip and amusing story. Glancing at me once, he said he felt he had to admonish Peter Walker when in his article in the Annual he had made Marjorie Hazeldene, Mrs. Herry Wharton. By all the rights she should have been Mrs. Robert Cherry. ('Freid you slipped up there, Peter, judging by the "Hear Hears" at the meeting).

Mr. Bentley's talk will become a landmark in the history of the Northern Section. At its close Reg. Hudson proposed, and Cliff Beardsell seconded, a vote of thanks. This was carried with acclamation.

Followed refreshments and the usual dozen conversations going on at once.

An interesting feature of our meetings is the increase in the number of ladies present. During Mr. Bentley's talk they listened with as much interest as the "boys". This is all to the good, for it gives the meeting a real family atmosphere. Vere was a lone member of her sex at our first meetings. She must have felt shy - or did she? Anyway, she's no need to now.

Attendance: J. Breeze Bentley, Cliff Beardsell, Herold Ogden, Brian Honeysett, Reg. Hudson, Norman Smith, Gerald Allison and Mrs. Allison, Miss Allison, Mary Allison and friend, Vere Coates, Stanley Mrs. and Keith Knight, Horace Twinham, W. H. Williamson, C. Topham and friends, A. Thomas, C. Banks, Mrs. Banks and Miss Christine Banks, David Pullan, David Killingbeck, W. Harrison, H. Leckenby.

Look to your laurels, London! Your offspring is a lively youngster.

HERBERT LOCKENBY,  
Northern Section Correspondent.

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LONDON SECTION OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB  
East Dulwich Meeting, Feb. 18th.

Pleasant memories of past triumphs and happy times were recalled at the latest meeting at Hume House. Now to crown everything, the Northerners are coming to town to help swell the next Hume House meeting on Whit-Sunday, May 13th. So it

was a very genial and happy chairman who opened the proceedings and quickly disposed of the usual formalities. Then he announced the proposed forthcoming visit of the Northern club and it was unanimously and enthusiastically acclaimed to hold the meeting at the most convenient place, which is Hume House. So make a note in your diaries and make this function the success it so deserves by giving us your company on this occasion.

The doyen of the club, Arthur Lawson gave a very interesting treatise on Jack Herksey and "The Boys of England" and was suitably thanked by the round of applause at the end of his reading.

The Postal Provincial members' Quiz has now been dispatched and any member who has not received their copy is asked to get in touch with me.

The chairman and myself both spoke of the shortage and increased price of paper. Elsewhere the editor will tell you all about it and all members are asked to pay their subs promptly so as to facilitate matters.

The chairman's daughter devised both of the quiz' and the results shewed that in the eliminator one Len was 1st, Bob Whiter 2nd, and Ben Whiter and Charlie Wright 3rd. The key word was the "Champion".

The other Quiz was won by Len with Charlie 2nd and Bob 3rd. Eleanor is to be congratulated on her two fine efforts.

The next meeting will be at 706 Lordship Lane on Sunday March 18th, 3.30 p.m.

And so thanks to Len for a very fine meeting.

Attendance: Len, Josie and Eleanor Peckman, Charlie and Olive Wright, Harry Homer, Hylton Flatman, Roger Southwood, Roger Jenkins, Reuben Godseve, Arthur Lawson, Eileen Reynolds, Frank Keeling, Jim Parrett, Ron Deacon, A. Young, Bob and Ben Whiter.

BENJAMIN G. WHITER.

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WANTED: Can anyone help me complete my collection of GEMS? Top price paid. 1249, 1251, 1252, 1254, 1255, 1256, 1257, 1258. 1260, 1261, 1269, 1271. 1273, 1274, 1275, 1277. 1278, 1279, 1280, 1281, 1282, 1283, 1284, 1285, 1286, 1297, 1298. C. Baker, 7 Marine Terrace, Waterloo Port, Caernarvon.

WANTED URGENTLY: Gems Nos. 819 and 946. Josephine Peckman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

# Hamiltonia

Conducted by Herbert Leckenby

Last month I stated that H. A. Hinton didn't know what he was talking about when he said there was a First Form at Greyfriars. Well, there certainly wasn't when he made the statement, but as Mr. Breeze Bentley pointed out to me at the Leeds meeting, there was an occasion when one was formed for the benefit of Wally Bunter when he became a master for a short time. But that was years afterwards in No's 731-735, and then was a brainwave of a substitute writer.

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Mr. Bentley brought along with him to the Leeds meeting a number of mint  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. copies of the Magnet. They created a good deal of interest and the illustrations, by Hutton Mitchell, a considerable amount of amusement. One in particular portrayed two masters: one a forlorn elderly gentleman was Mr. Copper, the other a handsome young fellow who might have been "ingate. Mr. Bentley defied anyone to say who it was. At the finish someone exclaimed "Prout!" He guessed right, but only because the figure was holding a rifle!

Some time after we started the list of Magnet titles I received a complete one from Jim Southway which also denoted the stories written by a substitute writer thus (S). As we had not been showing them from the first I thought it was perhaps best to delete the sign, but last month they slipped in. So I've changed my mind, and to give the whole picture here are the numbers of the substitute stories not shown previously: 85, 87, 99, 116, 165, 260, 282, 287, 290, 313, 317, 321, 339, 347, 349, 361, 377, 382, 385, 388, 390, 394, 400, 404, 405, 411, 414, 421, 424, 426, 427, 430, 432, 436, 440, 448, 449, 451, 454, 455, 464, 466, 468, 472, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 484, 486, 495, 499, 500.

From now on then those interested will be able to see which are not genuine Frank Richards stories without referring to the 1949 C.D. Annual.

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Thanks to the Sunderland Exhibition, I have had some very interesting letters from Mr. James Warren, full of delightful reminiscences. In one he gives a graphic description of an adventure in a mine. Here it is:

"When I left school at 14 I went down the mine at Wear-mouth Colliery, and I was a traffic boy opening and shutting a door to let the driver through. Hanging my lamp on a pit prop I waded through dozens of Magnets, Gem and Union Jacks. But I think the most amazing thing that ever happened to me was one shift when I was sent along a long passage to sit at a wheel to pump water away.

"I placed my lamp on a nail driven into a prop, pulled out a Magnet, read it through, folded it up and went properly to sleep, to be wakened hours later by voices shouting for me along the passage."

In the depths of the mind - a contrast to Greyfriars green fields.

Mr. Warren had with him at the Exhibition his father, who is 86!

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THE PICK OF THE SERIES. No. 4.

The HARRY WHARTON - versus - Mr. QUELCH Series. (Published Autumn of 1932. Nos. 1285-1296)

This series formed one of the items in the First Heat of the "COLLECTORS' DIGEST" Voting Contest, and, though the result of the voting is not known at the time of writing, there is no doubt that this magnificent series will rank very high in the popularity stakes. Almost exactly the same plot had been used by Mr. Richards some seven years earlier, - at the end of 1925 to be precise, in Magnets Nos. 879 - 888. In both series there was a rift in the Famous Five; both contained a story called "The Worst Boy at Greyfriars"; Wharton and Mr. Quelch became bitter enemies; and the Remove Captain lost the captaincy and was finally expelled. In both series, too, Maulever was the best friend of the erring Harry.

The difference lay in the fact that in the first series Wharton actually did the things of which he was merely suspected unjustly in the second series. In the 1925 series he actually smoked, played cards, and broke bounds to visit the Cross Keys.

Which was the better series? I think that, without any doubt, the first series was the better written, though in 1932 the reader was more "in clover" and perhaps, for that reason alone, would have enjoyed the second series more.

The word "powerful" was often used by the Editor to describe a story, but without any doubt at all that word was appropriately used to describe the 1925 series. In my opinion, this series contained the most powerful writing which Frank Richards ever contributed to the old papers. The character studies were brilliant; the pen pictures were "adult" and may have been over the heads of some of the Magnet supporters of that era; so tense and vivid were some of the descriptive passages, that I venture to think that many readers would have excusable tears in their eyes as they followed the adventures of the wayward fellow who starred in the series. In passing, Bunter was a callous villain at this time, another point of difference from the later series.

Wharton went to Monte Carlo with the Bounder for Christmas, and then changed his mind and returned to spend the festive season with Jimmy Silver. (His Christmas with Jimmy was described in the "Boys' Friend" of that year.)

The end of the series was true to life, and, for that very reason, perhaps a trifle dull. But it was a superb piece of writing. The 1932 series lacked the powerful characterisation and descriptive matter of the earlier work, but it made grand reading all the same. A trifle more episodic in style, it was undoubtedly a happier set of stories. It was marred, though not spoiled, by a hackneyed and unworthy ending, which was almost an anti-climax.

Herry Wharton redeemed himself by saving Mr. Quelch's life in a flooded cave, and Bunter healed the breach in the Co. by a typical Bunterism.

The series had a natural ending in the story before the final one of the series. In fact, when the yarns were reprinted in the S.O.L., the story ended at this point, and many critics have commented that the "office boy wrote in the new ending". Whether the Editor was right in ending the story at this stage is a moot point. I think that something could be said for doing so. But the author of the story should have been asked to supply the new ending.

Undoubtedly, Frank Richards gave the series an unexpected twist in making Wharton refuse the olive branch which Nugent offered. Had Wharton actually gone on the coasting cruise with Dick Trumper, as he had planned, and some other method been used to bring about the reconciliation with Mr. Quelch, we might have had a smashing climax to a wonderful series. Still, we had the Famous Five and Bunter at Wharton Lodge for that Xmas, so we can't complain. It takes more than an anti-climax to spoil Frank Richards at his best.

HORACE RATCLIFF

By Bernard Prime

No normal reader can have too much of a nasty character, though strangely enough he can have too much of a particularly pleasant one, especially if the latter is inclined to be slightly dull or colourless and not particularly entertaining.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Horace Ratcliff of the New House at St. Jim's is an extremely unpleasant character. Indeed, one could go further and quite truthfully call him a "nasty piece of work." "Ratty" was a good star turn in the Gem Library, and most of us remember him with pleasure if not, exactly with affection; indeed, the latter would be quite impossible to any normally human person. It is hard indeed - nay well-nigh impossible - to discover anything approaching a redeeming quality in the Housemaster of the New House at St. Jim's. Hacker of Greyfriars was not a nice man, but he has been known to register courage while Mr. Ratcliff frequently displayed cowardice of the meanest and most contemptible kind.

Perhaps it is not always true that a tyrant is also a mean-natured and cowardly man, but often it is, and the combination of tyrant and coward was certainly the main stuff of which Mr. Horace Ratcliff was made. He was too bad to be true.

As regards his appointment at St. Jim's, it is a little difficult to see how he ever came to secure it, let alone keep it, but that is, after all, none of our business! The wise fan-reader who is sensible enough to recognize a "meaty" character when he sees one will not bother his head too much about little matters like these! Suffice it to say, we liked to see him trotting about in the paws of the Gem Library from time to time, and the more ferocious he looked the better we were pleased. It pleased us mightily, too, when on the occasion of the visit of an old boy named Stoker to exact vengeance on the beast for too many undeserved floggings, he had to run like a child to Darrell, the finest boxer in the Sixth Form, for protection. This, to my mind, was an outstanding incident and showed the real Hamilton touch. We were also highly gratified on the occasion when the obnoxious man was compelled to purchase a rather unpleasant and ferocious bulldog, or some such brute, though I have forgotten the exact details.

As regards cricket, he does not seem to have favoured the great summer game, but has expressed the opinion that it should be abolished.



Some of us may recall that Dr. Keate of Eton fame was similar in some ways to "Retty". The following incident is similar enough to show the resemblance, for was it not the Etonian Doctor who flogged the candidates for Confirmation under the impression that they had been sent up to him for delinquency?

When memory of old characters grows dim and weak, and the "misty corridors" seem to become still more misty, one character will stand out rock-like in many an old reader's mind, and his name will be Horace Ratcliff.

=====

MAGNET TITLES (contd.)

(S) denotes Substitute's story.

521, Danger Ahead; 522, Tom Redwing's Resolve; 523 (S) Hunting for Treasure; 524, (S) Loyal Sir Jimmy; 525, Skinner the Spy; 526, Bunter's Latest; 527, (S) A Bird of Passage; 528, Coker the Joker; 529, (S) The Fighting Fifth; 530, Tom Redwing's Chance; 531, Tom Redwing Hero; 532, Bunter to the Rescue; 533, Tom Redwing's Win; 534, Saved from Shame; 535, (S) A Soldier's Son; 536, The Man from the Scumme; 537, His Father's Son; 538, (S) Billy Bunter's Birthright; 539, Bolsover's Way; 540, Napoleon of Greyfriars; 541, William the Good; 542, Bolsover's Enemy; 543, Tom Redwing's Father; 544, (S) William the Werlike; 545 (S) The Shylock of the Second; 546, Angel of the Fourth; 547, Kicking over the Traces; 548, Sir Jimmy's Enemy; 549, (S) The Second Form Mystery; 550 (S) Put to the Test; 551, Coker's Campaign; 552 (S) Dick Russell's Chum; 553, Smithy's Scheme; 554, The Broken Bond; 555, Rough on Redwing; 556, Fallen Fortunes; 557 (S) The Greyfriars Tree-dwellers; 558, The Missing Masterpiece; 559, A Case of Conscience; 560, His Country's Cell; 561, Coker's Latest; 562, (S) Walker of the Sixth; 563, In Spite of Himself; 564, (S) Spring's Brother; 565 (S) Sacked; 566 (S) The Wiles of Wibley; 567, (S) Samuel and Sammy; 568, Bunter the Punter; 569, Wally Bunter's Luck; 570, Billy Bunter's Wheeze; 571, Wally of the Remove; 572, A Dog with a Bad Name; 573 (S) The Amazing Bunter; 574, Bravo, Bunter; 575, For Another's Sins; 576, The Black Sheep of Highcliffe; 577, When Rogues Fell Out; 578, Standing by Snoop; 579, Wally's Wheeze; 580 Hoskins' Chance; 581 (S) Griots at Grips; 582, The Artful Dodger; 583, Loder's Luck; 584, The Terrible Uncle; 585, The Return of the Native; 586, Foes of the Remove; 587, Missing from School; 588 (S) His Majesty the Major.

THE NELSON LEE COLUMN

Conducted by Robert Blythe

(All communications temporarily to Leonard Packman,  
27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E. 22.)

This past month has brought me a number of enquiries, all of which I have replied to individually, with the exception of two. These, I must confess, have beaten me! Here they are, and if anyone can supply the answer to either, I shall be glad to have them and publish them, for I feel they will be useful data.

Firstly, how many "Nugget 3d. Library" issues contained stories of Nelson Lee and Nipper?

Secondly, what was the total number of issues of the "Detective Library" and how many contained stories of Nelson Lee and Nipper?

So, what about it, chums? Does anyone know? I wonder!

Continuing the "Nelson Lee" Library (O.S.) stories to be found in the "Monster" Library, here are the remainder.

No. 11	"Monster"	=	Nelson Lee	(O.S.)	229 to 236 inc.
" 12	"	=	"	"	256 to 268 "
" 13	"	=	"	"	264 to 274 "
" 14	"	=	"	"	285 to 293 "
" 15	"	=	"	"	275 to 283 "
" 16	"	=	"	"	294 to 304 "
" 17	"	=	"	"	305 to 311 "
" 18	"	=	"	"	320 to 327 "
" 19	"	=	"	"	338 to 348 "

End of series

Now for Nelson Lee (1st New Series) titles.

- 81, St. Franks in Flanders; 82, Handforth's Barring-out;  
 83, The Remove Rebellion; 84, Martial Law at St. Franks;  
 85, Sticking It Out; 86, The Phantom of the Modern House;  
 87, The "No-Surrender" Rebels; 88, Nipper Sees It Through;  
 89, Victory for the Rebels; 90, The Boot-boy Baronet;  
 91, The Schemer of the Remove; 92, The Voice of the Tempter;  
 93, The Boot-boy's Luck; 94, The St. Frank's Ice Carnival;  
 95, Handforth the Detective; 96, The Mystery of Edgemore Manor;  
 97, The Schoolboy Householders; 98, Fifty Pounds Reward;  
 99, Out of the Past; 100, The Boat-race Truants;  
 101, St. Frank's at the Fair; 102, The Mystery of the Poisoned River;  
 103, All His Own Fault; 104, The Outcast of the Remove.

## Letter Box

### It Was a Success!

County Borough of Sunderland,  
Public Libraries, Museum and  
Art Gallery.

29th January, 1951.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

On behalf of my Committee I express to you my sincere thanks for your kindness in lending the Collection of magazines. The Exhibition was a great success in every way. It aroused considerable interest in the Town, and it is significant that during the 29 days during which it was on view, it was seen by 8,022 visitors - figures which I regard as very satisfactory.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

JAMES CRAWLEY.

### Now for Newcastle!

City & Country of Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
Public Libraries,

21st February, 1951.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

Thank you for your letter of 14th February, and for the two parcels - which have now been received. I am enclosing 4/- to cover the cost of postage and registration.

I am hoping that the exhibition will open on Wednesday next, February 28th, for a fortnight. These dates will, I hope, not be too early to include in your interesting magazine.

I am most grateful for your co-operation and advice, and I am sure that my Committee, when they meet in March, will endorse these thanks.

Yours sincerely,

E. AUSTIN HINTON,  
City Librarian.

### Ben Whiter Wields His Bat!

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for the February "C.D." which I found right up to standard. I can sympathise with you as regards the cost of paper, being actively engaged in the paper trade.

However, one mistake in the article "Popular Papers of the Past" No. 13. "Boys of the (Our) Empire (Melrose). Surely Warwick Armstrong was not to be numbered amongst the golden

age of cricketers. He came on the scene much later.

John Medcraft's fine article on Juvenalia is rather spoilt by his usual dig at Hamiltonia. But he makes a great mistake in thinking that a good many collectors started on the demise of the "Magnet" or were inspired by the book "Boys Will be Boys" and "Old Boys' Book Clubs". When our generation is passed I submit there will still be collectors, even those collecting "Eagles", "Champions", the many Thomson House Papers and the comic papers of today. I, myself, had a marvellous collection of the comic papers round about 1912-1913 which unfortunately were lost over the years. I was about eight years old then and regularly bought "Butterfly", "Firefly", "Merry & Bright", "Favourite", "Chips", "Comic Cuts"<sup>7</sup>, "Jester", "Puck" etc. I remember buying the first "Rainbow" with the sweet gramophone record given away with it. My knowledge of these comics stands me in good stead when the monthly quiz contains any comic paper questions at the O.B.B.C. meetings. Mr. Medcraft naturally likes the Victorian papers better as he is of that generation, hence his dislike of the popularity of the Hamilton and more recent boys' papers. In conclusion, I think that commercialism has crept in rather a lot in the buying and selling of these books even after allowing for the law of supply and demand. But I feel sure that even today a hunting collector can still pick up bargains, e.g. Ian Whitmore and his "Magnets" and the four beautiful bound volumes of the "Captain" bought by my brother Bob for four shillings.

Yours sincerely,  
BENJAMIN G. WHITER.

Thanks Eric!

The Modern School,  
Grove Road, Surbiton.  
9th February, 1951.

Dear Herbert,

Very many thanks for your kind letter, and for a smashing issue of the C.D. Congratulations on No.50, - half a century is no mean achievement these days, when so many people put their hands to the plough and then turn back. St.Paul would have subscribed to my sentiments, and you have the full and hearty gratitude of myself and your big band of friends for the wonderful work you have done. Among all my many acquaintances in the hobby, I can think of nobody who could

have filled the post of editor as you have done. For as the King is above politics, - so, you, Herbert, look with a kindly eye on all the old papers, and you never show any partisanship. May you still be seated in the editorial chair when No.1050 is mailed to us!

I think Mr. Medcraft's article is a very fine one, and of absorbing interest. I like it so much because it strikes a new note.

I like your comments on the remarks made by Hinton in his chats. It occurs to me that, in the next Annual, a collection of some of the most typical of his "Replies in Brief" would be good fun. What price letting me get some of them together, when the time comes, if it is not pinching your thunder.

All the best,

ERIC FAYNE.

(By all means get going on the Hinton replies for the next Annual. I'll be delighted.- H.L.)

A Letter from a Breve Soul

(Sometimes I get a letter which brings a lump to the throat and a tear to the eye. Here is an extract from one such letter. Needless to say John, who is only in his teens, will continue to get his C.D. and maybe some of you may have a few papers you can spare to comfort him during the coming months of ordeal. - H.L.)

"Lisneger",

6, Temple Gardens,  
Rathmines, Dublin,  
Ireland.

Publication Delayed:

My dear Mr. Leckenby,

This is just a wee note to say good-bye, for the time being. I am flying away to hospital in the morning, there to undergo one big operation, three little ones and then a lovely (???) rest in plaster of paris. I expect to be away about ten months. I won't be able, or so I imagine, from past experiences, to write to anybody, but all mail addressed here to me will be forwarded. I have arranged for my COMET and KNOCKOUT to be sent regularly, thus I will have some link with dear old Greyfriars and other loved spots and pals. I would dearly love to go on receiving my "C.D." each month, but I realise that this is impossible. I just could not expect you to go on sending it to me free for another ten months. But may I ask a favour? If any month you should find a copy of the C.D. left over, one that nobody wants, could you PLEASE

let me have it. I do not mind how soiled or battered it is. You see, Herbert, I REALLY DO love my C.D.

Thanks again for all your kindness and great generosity. God bless you.... Think of me an odd time....I will constantly be thinking of you.

Gratefully and sincerely,  
JOHN C. STOKES.

THE ANNUAL

Present State of the Poll

An Amazing Pair	157
The Populer "Popular"	156
Rise and Fall of the Boys' Friend	123
The Bounder of Greyfriars	123
Monograph on the Criminals' Confederation	103
What Might Have Been	101
Rookwood Review	88
Series from Victorian Papers	66

Six points awarded for a first position, five for second, down to one for sixth. It would appear that the sect which worships at the shrine of Hamiltonia is on the alert. But there are still lots of forms to come in.

NEILSON LEES, Boys' Life, Schoolboys' Own, Boys' Realm, etc. for sale; Lees (old series) WANTED.  
L.M.Allen, 3 Montgomery Drive, Sheffield 7.

FOR SALE: In excellent condition, "THE CAPTAIN", bound volumes, 1, 2, 20, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48. Any volume sold separately, or I will exchange for other old boys' papers. Offers to: Leonard Peckman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

WANTED: Magnets (600-900), Gems (pre-1000), Populars, Holiday Annuals. Pre-war Triumphs, Hotspurs, Wizards, Skippers, Adventures, Rovers, Boys' Friends, Pilots, Boys' Magazines, Modern Boys, Hotspur, Wizard or other Annuals. All with School Stories. Good prices paid. P. Willett, 67, Ford Bridge Road, Ashford, Middx.

WANTED: almost any Henderson publications, especially Young Folks Tales (1906-14). Could if preferred offer various pre-1914 items (non-Henderson) in exchange. E. Mason, 20, Warriston Gardens, Edinburgh 4.

Something to Look Forward to

February 24th, 1951.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Lately I have been evolving a card game called "The Bunter Game", in which the Bunter card plays somewhat the part of the "joker". I have a rather vague idea of getting it out for Christmas: but in present conditions it doesn't seem very probable. I have found it very interesting to evolve, in leisure moments: but as the poet has remarked, "full many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air". I wonder whether the time will ever come when we shall be able to forget that dismal word "shortage". Anyhow there will be two Tom Merry books and one Bunter book out in April, so one must be thankful for small mercies.

Always yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

Sexton Blake at the FestivalFestival of Britain 1951 Exhibition of Books

24th February, 1951.

Dear Sir,

I am collecting on behalf of the organiser some material for a special decorative feature in this exhibition, and I am writing to ask for your help in connection with it.

The feature consists of a number of large false "Books" with automatically turning pages, each one of which will show a series of illustrations of famous scenes and characters in English fiction. The illustrations will be mounted on the leaves of the "books" which will be placed in compartments at the main end of the hall.

One of these "books" will contain illustrations of famous literary detectives, and we are naturally very anxious to include Sexton Blake. The Amalgamated Press have suggested that you might be willing to lend us some material.

We cannot, of course, use books for this exhibit, as only single sheets can be mounted. What we are looking for, therefore, are single illustrations, book jackets, or imperfect copies of illustrated books which we can purchase and break up for the illustrations. If you can help us in any way, we should be most grateful. I need hardly add that, if you would like to lend something, it would be fully insured and carefully safeguarded.

Yours truly, PATRICIA ROBINSON.

# Blakiana

MARCH.

1951.

Editor:- H.H.Bond - 10, Dry Men, Rhinbina, Cardiff. Wales.

## THE ROUND TABLE.

Once again I would like to appeal to those readers with a literary bent to submit articles for future issues of Blakiana. My copy is getting very scarce again and as I like to be able to plan a few months ahead I should very much appreciate your co-operation in this matter. We want articles that are different. Something that will strike a new angle. Already I have been promised some excellent material for the 1951 Annual, but it is the monthly that worries me most, for I do like to be able to give your money's worth as it were. The Sexton Blake Library issues for February introduced a new writer of Blake yarns, one Willy King. How about some new talent for this amateur effort.

Cheerio for now

H.H. BOND.

## THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY (FIRST SERIES) 1915-1925. (1)

- |                                      |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. The Yellow Tiger.                 | G. H. Teed.  |
| 2. Ill Gotten Gains.                 | A. Murray.   |
| 3. The Shadow Of His Crime.          | H. Osborne.  |
| 4. The Rajah's Revenge.              | A. Murray.   |
| 5. Midst Balkan Perils.              |              |
| 6. The Red Spider.                   | E.S. Brooks. |
| 7. The Case Of Convict 308.          | E. Alias.    |
| 8. Victims of Villiany.              | A. Murray.   |
| 9. The Merchant's Secret.            | H. Osborne.  |
| 10. The Grip of the Law.             |              |
| 11. The Two Mysteries.               | G. H. Teed.  |
| 12. The Peril of the Prince.         | E.S. Brooks. |
| 13. The Case Of The Twin Detectives. | "            |
| 14. The Case Of The Suppressed Will. | H. Graydon.  |
| 15. The Black Chrysanthemum.         | A. Murray.   |
| 16. Payment in Full.                 | H. Osborne.  |



THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY FEB: 1951. BY ANTHONY PARSONS.

How attractive this month's covers are. The generous use of the primary colours (red, blue and yellow) has a most cheering effect. It is still a thrill to get two new Sexton Blake's each month.

No. 231 "The Millionaire's Nest Egg" by Anthony Parsons.

Straightforward and readable. The moral is: if you wish to compensate a man you have wronged by stuffing 3642 diamonds into his collection of bronze horses, tell him that you have done. Otherwise he may be murdered. Still, it does provide Blake with another case.

No. 232 "Partners in Crime" by Hilary King.

Greetings to a new author. A welcome surprise. This is another tale about diamonds. Plenty of action and movement, and some good characterizations. Blake and Tinker on the scene from Page 1, which is what I like. Nice work Hilary King. Come again.

G.A.

COMPETITION no. 1.

Here, at last, is the first of the remunerative little contests which I promised last year. No. 1 is a purely voting contest, but following contests will be of different types. A cash prize of ONE POUND will be awarded to the reader whose entry most nearly agrees with the general vote. Listed below are SIX famous S.B. story characters. All you have to do is to write them out on a piece of paper in the order in which you consider them the best. Your name and address MUST be written on your entry. All entries MUST be received at 10, Llyn Wen, Rhinwina, Cardiff by first post on ~~February~~ March 24th 1951. The result will appear in the APRIL Blakiana. Only ONE entry will be accepted from each competitor. In case of a tie the prize money will be equally divided. The contest will be considered null and void should not less than ONE DOZEN entries be received. Here are the characters:-

1. DR. HUNTON RYMER.
2. FOLSETT DE ZEMITH.
3. RUPERT WALDO.
4. R.S.V. PURVALE.
5. BERN DOLLAND.
6. LEON MONTPEL.

Entries to be addressed to "The Editor" "Blakiana".

A JOB FOR PEDRO?

Regarding the theft of the Coronation Stone from Westminster Abbey. The next move is uncertain. Marshall Aid does not appear to cover contingencies of this kind; and the high-priests of Tibetan monasteries, who are always good in these situations, have their own troubles at present. No doubt the scent is now too cold for the use of bloodhounds, otherwise we would suggest the use of Pedro, the famous hound of Mr. Sexton Blake. But he may have been put down during the war when his daily ration of beefstakes got short. But what has happened to the doyen of English detectives? When Lostrade is beaten, send for Holmes.

.....

The above is an extract from an article which recently appeared in "The Irish Independent" and was sent to the Editor by Mr. James C. Deasy of Dublin. Both the Editor and Mr. Deasy wish to be enlightened on the reference to "Lostrade". Who and what is this character? Does any reader know?

.....

CAMPAIGN!!!

It is the considered opinion of the Editor of Blakiana and many of his fellow Sexton Blake addicts that their hero has not had a fair chance "on the air". Dozens of new radio sleuths and adventurers have been created by one and another, including the popular Dick Barton and his more stable contemporary P.C. 49. Soon, we hear, Barton is to have a rest and we think it would be a good idea to suggest to the B.B.C. and to the A.P. that Sexton Blake should have a chance. We therefore urge all Blake fans to write to both parties suggesting a Blake series on the air. If enough requests are received I should imagine SOME notice will be taken. So, go to it Blake fans. If we can't get the B.B.C. interested perhaps Radio Luxembourg will be glad of the chance!!!

BLAKE THROUGH THE YEARS (continued)

WALTER WEBB.

Although the bulk of Blake's exploits appeared in the pages of the UNION JACK, an occasional serial featuring him appeared in the HARVILL and PIRICK.

Who gathered together most of the writers of the stories published in the three Harmsworth papers was a clever and enterprising young man named SUMMERS, who, later was promoted to the editorship of ANSWERS. He had a big share in making them successful, and introduced nearly all those writers I have already mentioned, whose work became so popular in and after the Victorian era. It must be emphasised, however, that the success of the Harmsworth Digs Three was largely due to the editorial guidance of the writers, who were called up every week, when likely subjects for stories were discussed, and the manner in which they should be treated was debated. The authors responded ungrudgingly, and with such an excellent spirit pervading in the Harmsworth camp it was little wonder that success was achieved.

It is interesting to try and imagine just who were those editors, authors and the like, who might have been found gathered at these conferences in the long ago. Seated around an immense looking Round Table, one might have been able to pick out nearly all those who have already had an introduction here; other include Sidney Warwick, who wrote occasionally for the boys papers, but contributed in the main to adult periodicals, such as ANSWERS. Now living in retirement in South Devon, Mr. Warwick, although a highly successful and popular mystery and detective story writer before the two World Wars, never wrote of Blake, although his son chronicled one isolated adventure in the UNION JACK in 1930.

Then there was that very prolific boys' writer, W.D. Home-Gill, who wrote some of the early Blake stories, if not during the Victorian era, then immediately following. As some slight doubts exist as to whether Reginald Wray was really the pen name of Home-Gill, let me say here that there is no question about it. W. D. Home-Gill and Reginald Wray were one and the same writer. This popular author died many years ago, and to-day his two sons, W.B. and E.R. carry on the good work using the family name.

As an editor of the Blake stories at a later period, young William Hone-Gall was to introduce to the ever-increasing ranks of Blake authors a famous sporting personage, details of whom must be left until later.

Amongst the gathering there might have been seen Arthur Applin, who was to become a well-known serial writer. It is possible that he wrote a few early adventures of Blake, though there is no definite evidence that he did so. Some stories published in the UNION JACK in 1904, dealing with Blake's on the stage may possibly have been his work, but not being sufficiently familiar with Applin's style, I am reluctant to commit myself to a definite claim in this instance. Like at least three other old Blake chroniclers whom I will introduce later, Applin appeared on the stage in his early days after having read for the law, which profession it had been his intention to take up. The lure of the footlights, however, proved the stronger attraction, and, at the age of 22 he was behind them, working for Ben Greet, a well known Actor Manager of that period, and the principal of the Ben Greet touring companies.

Another author with stage experience was Arthur Steffens, who, for several years in the early days, wrote regularly of Blake, and then dropped out of the U.J. completely, although going on to contribute frequently to the companion papers. Of Polish origin, Steffens wrote nearly all his boys' stories under the name of Arthur S. Hardy, and was almost certainly Athelroy Daunt.

Arthur S. Hardy and Arthur Applin had this in common: they both appeared on the stage in company with a member of the famous Terry family. Applin appeared with Fred Terry, the youngest of the family, in "Sweet Nell of Old Drury", the cast of which included the latter's wife, Julia Neilson, whilst Hardy trod the footlights with Edward Terry.

TO BE CONTINUED.

"THE BIRTH OF SAMSON BLAKE" is the intriguing title of another new article which will appear next month.

Advertiser in "Blakiana"

Cheap rates with excellent circulation.