

# THE COLLECTOR'S DIGEST

JUNE 1953

VOL. 7 NO. 78

PRICE 1s. 6d.

## SPECIAL CORONATION NUMBER.

Splendid Complete School Tale and Free Hampers for Readers.



**CORONATION DAY AT ST. JIM'S!**

# The Collector's Digest

Vol. 7. No. 78.

Price 1s.6d.

JUNE, 1953

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



*Elizabeth R*  
1953

## FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

OUR CORONATION NUMBER. When this number appears all the newspapers and periodicals will be full of Coronation news and pictures, so why shouldn't our little magazine mark the historic event, too? We are doing it somewhat differently, however, for we are dwelling on Coronations past. For the material I have been able to get together, my thanks are due to Bill Gander, that good friend in far off Manitoba, Harry Stables and Eric Fayne. Eric also kindly supplied the photograph from which we were able to get our cover picture. I wonder how many of our "Gem" fans remember buying that number in the long ago.

Unfortunately we were unable to include some of our popular papers. The Nelson Lee Library, of course, rose and fell between two Coronations, nevertheless, as will be seen, Nelson Lee and Nipper were busy on one occasion before St. Franks was born.

As for the Union Jack it was still a halfpenny at the time of the 1903 Coronation and no special effort seems to have been made. I don't think anything worth recording happened in 1911

either.

Now I should just like to refer to a remarkable circumstance concerning a royal event and a boy's weekly, though it wasn't a Coronation, instead the wedding of King Alphonso of Spain and Princess Ena of Battenburg. I cannot remember the date but I think it would be in 1908, or maybe late 1907. Anyway Bretts Halfpenny Surprise published a little before the event had a story telling of an attempt to assassinate the royal pair. As history tells such an attempt was actually made on the day of the wedding, an attempt which was nearly successful.

Now I have a clear recollection of seeing the story at the time; I am also certain some newspaper had a paragraph about it, yet there is one thing that puzzles me. According to our records Bretts 'Halfpenny Surprise' with its orange cover finished in 1906 after a run of over ten years. I have an idea that the paper in which this story appeared was the 'Surprise' in a new format with a larger page size and possibly increased to a penny. The old one certainly did not make a habit of publishing topical stories. If any of our older members can give me any details so that they can be included in the feature being prepared for the Annual, I shall be most grateful.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

P.S. 'Annual' Ballot result next month.

# HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

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Greyfriars Nationalized! Don't be alarmed, it's only the title of an amusing skit which appeared in "Punch", yes "Punch" on April 15th. It ran to a page and a bit of Britain's acknowledged leading humorous weekly. It was written by Anthony Powell with an illustration by Norman Mansbridge.

We find Bob Cherry declaring that next term the school is to be re-named "The Grey School of Social Significance". Bunter is in trouble, as usual, for the picture shows him padding himself

with several copies of the "New Statesman" in preparation for a visit to the Head. The Owl also makes a caustic comment on what George Orwell said about them.

Unfortunately Anthony Powell's memory seems to have let him down for he seems to be under the impression that D'Arcy was a Greyfriars man. The artist follows his lead for he has Gussy in the picture. Bob Cherry groans "Oh gum! Here's a go, we'll be losing Gussy. The Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy won't do at all at Greyfriars in the Century of the Common Boy". But D'Arcy retorts; "Weally have none of you taken the twobble to find out that my father, Lord Eastwood, is a Labah peer!"

There's another glaring mistake when Harry Wharton groans "Will Prout remain our housemaster? I hope not."

Vernon Smith's father it seems is standing at the next election in the 'Labour interest' and Fisher T. Fish will have to clear out because they won't want a bally American witch-hunting the new masters.

There's a lot more in the same vein and the article finishes with Bunter saying, "Anyway I'm leaving this term. I've passed the interview for the Ministry of Food! And the Intelligence Test too! They say the elevenses there are simply fratjous!"

Well it's all good fun, but thank goodness they'll all turn up just as of yore in the next Bunter Book.

Thanks, Eric Humphries, for sending me the cutting.

\* \* \* \* \*

Postscript. A week or two later "Punch" published a letter, supposedly from D'Arcy, denying that he ever was "associated with those Greyfriars people."

\* \* \* \* \*

CARDEW THE CAD. Said the "Radio Times", May 8th - "Listeners who remember the famous pre-war boys' paper the Gem will perhaps recall that the 'cad of St. Jims' was a certain Ralph Cardew. When Douglas Robinson was invited to join the R.A.F. Garg Show during the war he remembered Cardew and decided to base his comedy act on the 'beastly schoolboy'. As he developed and elaborated the act, Robinson dropped his own Christian name and substituted 'Cardew'."

Some of you will remember that on one of my London trips I had the pleasure, thanks to Harry Homer, of being introduced to Douglas 'Cardew' Robinson. It was evident from what he told me then that he was a faithful Gemite.

And here once again a Hamilton paper provides copy for the "Radio Times" with its eight million circulation!

\* \* \* \* \*

And now for Hamiltoniana's contribution to Coronation nostalgia.

### WORD LADDER COMPETITION

Gerry Allison reports: I have hardly been overwhelmed by the number of entries for this contest, the aim of which, readers will remember, was to change the word POTTER into GREENE by altering one letter at a time, and making a proper word at each step.

The example I gave, showed COKER altered into PROUT in this way, although, as some competitors have pointed out, one of the steps - 'polls' - was omitted. This was a printer's error may I say!

Well, my own solution was done in 20 steps, but three competitors have beaten this. The winner is Tom Hopperton of Scarborough, who managed to effect the change in 16 steps, all New English Dictionary words. Here they are.

POTTER	PATPER	PANTER	WANTER	WAITER	WHITER	WHITES
WHINES	CHINES	CHINKS	CHICKS	CHECKS	CHEEKS	CREEKS
	GREEKS	GREENS	GREENE	= 16.		

Tom therefore receives the prize of half a guinea, and I congratulate him upon a very brilliant effort. I hardly think his score could be beaten.

The two others were Stanley Knight, of Bradford, and James Cook of Watford, each with 18 words, both praiseworthy efforts, for it certainly was a teaser.

\* \* \* \* \*

### CORONATION DAYS

by ERIC FAYNE

\*\*\*

The world's greatest Schoolboy characters of all time, - Tom Merry, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Harry Wharton, and Billy Bunter, - have been popular favourites for five reigns. Surely without exaggeration, we can call them the Royal Family of schoolboys.

The papers which gave them birth, the Gem and the Magnet -

were supreme during four reigns. Hitler killed those papers, and their death left a gap on the bookstalls which has never been filled. But to the satisfaction of all of us, Hitler could not kill Tom Merry or Billy Bunter. Our schoolboy characters, in their old familiar settings, live on in this gracious Elizabethan age, and their adventures are as entertaining today as they were in the slower and more sedate times of Edward the Seventh, when they first appeared.

Most gratifying of all, the King of school story writers, Charles Hamilton, is still with us in this royal year of nineteen fifty-three, to charm the passing hours with his new masterpieces. It is the earnest hope of every reader of The Collectors' Digest that he may be spared to us, to continue his splendid work, for a great many years to come.

Never at any time in the history of Greyfriars or St. Jim's can any of his readers have doubted his intense loyalty and reverence for the Crown. His stories, as British as the Union Jack itself, are the very essence of the belief in the British way of life. Through the change and decay which have taken place in the outer world and even in this country since 1906, the star of patriotism has always shone brightly in the stories of Charles Hamilton.

In 1906 when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy first made his bow, in 1907 when Tom Merry came along to be the Hero of the Shell, and in 1908 when Harry Wharton and Billy Bunter made their initial appearance, Edward the Peacemaker was on the throne. By the time that Talbot and Tom Redwing were introduced at their respective schools George the Fifth was reigning. Today, in the new Elizabethan age, we have all those characters with us still, appearing as they so long deserved, between stiff covers.

The first Coronation Issue of the Magnet, - No. 175, was dated June 17th 1911. Entitled "THE KING'S GUEST", the issue contained an illustration by Arthur Clarke, showing Harry Wharton kneeling before King George the Fifth. The artist captured the likeness of His Majesty in an almost uncanny exactness.

The red cover was adorned by a Clark picture showing the Head of Greyfriars, with his staff, accompanied by three soldiers of the Empire, standing on a platform before a large Union Jack, addressing the assembled school.

The story commenced with a Coronation picnic "under the slopes of the Shoulder, the great rock that shut in Pegg Bay to the north". The picnic, attended by the chums and Miss Marjorie and

Miss Clara, was interrupted by the wreck of a strange yacht on the Shark's Back, a sunken rock in Pegg Bay.

Wharton rescued Prince Otto of Kaltebad, coming to England for the Coronation ceremonies, from the sea, and thus won the eternal gratitude of that royal personage. The latter was pursued by anarchists, to add to the excitement, and from the fact that his officers spoke German, it could be assumed that Kaltebad was situated somewhere in central Europe.

The prince stayed on at Greyfriars for a few days, and played cricket and leap-frog, until Harry Wharton succeeded in capturing the villainous anarchist.

Wharton was ordered to attend Buckingham Palace to be thanked by his King in person, and this is how Frank Richards described the occasion:-

"Harry Wharton felt like a fellow in a dream as he sat in the Royal car which had met the party from Greyfriars at Charing Cross. As it passed through the streets of London, the Royal car attracted a great deal of attention, and there were loud cheers for the occupants. Wharton smiled as the cheers rung on his ears. He heard conjectures raised among the crowd as to whom he might be. Some suggested he was Prince Eddy, others rather fancied the theory that he was the youngest son of the Kaiser, while still others took him to be an Italian prince or a Russian Duke.

And perhaps their cheering would have been none the less hearty if they had known him for what he was, - a brave, honourable British schoolboy, who had risked his life to save that of a stranger, and, whom, therefore, their King delighted to honour".

Then came the most exciting moment of the story when "Prince Otto took Wharton's hand and led him into the presence of his majesty King George the Fifth....

'Come here, my lad', said the King. "Whoever serves a guest of the King of Great Britain serves his King. You have done well and bravely, my boy!

And the King held out his hand.

Wharton sank on his knees and kissed the hand of the King!"

Back at Greyfriars, Fisher T. Fish, the American, brought the story to a close on a humorous note, by saying "Gee! If it was me, I'd wear a glove on that hand and never wash it again as long as I lived!"

Not a great story, perhaps, when compared with the many

masterpieces of later Magnet history, but remarkable in the intimate way in which the King of Great Britain was introduced. For that reason alone it is a precious item among the collector's treasures, for I doubt whether, in these democratic days, an author would take the liberty of actually introducing the sovereign in person.

That week, in the Gem, Tom Merry & Co were in the last, thrilling stages of a visit to the South Seas, when they became shipwrecked in the Pacific. But the following week, - No. 176, dated June 24th 1911, - came the Coronation issue of the Gem, with the story entitled "CORONATION DAY AT ST. JIM'S".

Tom Merry and his friends were the possessors of "two hundred glittering gold sovereigns" as the result of their treasure-hunt in the South Seas. They resolved to spend the money in a gigantic Coronation celebration.

It was a yarn in light vein, introducing the rivalry with the Rylcombe Grammar School, and, apart from its theme, was not outstanding among the fine single stories appearing in the Gem at that time. The issue is, however, once again a collector's "gem" owing to the fact that it contains a picture actually drawn by Charles Hamilton himself, depicting Gussy looking for his fiver. The initials of the author-artist are clearly to be seen in the corner of the picture.

The blue cover was adorned with a fine picture by R.J. Macdonald, showing a fire work display in progress in the quadrangle, with a set piece of the King in the background and the words God Save the King.

When the re-prints were in full swing in 1936, I suggested that this story should be used as a Jubilee tale. This suggestion was acted upon, and as a result, it was not available as a Coronation story one year later.

Over twenty years were to go by before the papers saw another Coronation number. Magnet No. 1526, dated May 15th 1937, contained BILLY BUNTER'S CORONATION PARTY". It was a delightful story.

The Co, with Bunter, were concluding an Easter holiday at Seahill Park with the Bounder. The latter invited the party to join his Coronation celebrations in London, but the Co. refused, owing to the fact that Bunter was not included. However, Bunter, with his usual luck, managed to do a service to Lord Trant, and in consequence was able to invite Harry Wharton and Co to join a coronation party at Trant House. And Bunter was quite certain

that King George the Sixth bowed to him.

This issue bore a cover illustration by Leonard Shields, showing the Royal coach passing the cheering crowds. An excellent photograph of Their Majesties on page seven, enabled the Editor and his staff to join with every reader of the Magnet in wishing their Most Gracious Majesties a long, happy, and glorious reign.

The Greyfriars Herald, No. 240, in the centre of the paper, was also devoted to the coronation, and Dicky Nugent contributed "Doctor Birchmell's Coronation".

The same week, No. 1526 of the Gem was also a special Coronation issue. The red-white-and blue covers that the Gem was using enabled the producers to give the paper a most attractive Union Jack setting with an inset of an exceptionally fine photograph of the King and Queen.

The story of St. Jim's, unfortunately, had no coronation flavour. As I said earlier, the original coronation story had been used as a Jubilee tale, and, in any case, the paper was just at the last story of the famous series about Reggie Clavering, Tom Merry's Double. In the re-print process, the stories were being badly spoiled by unscientific abridgment, and this tip-top tale was no exception. Originally entitled "Brought to Book" it was now given the rather mawkish title of "HE WANTED TO BE EXPELLED".

However, the two centre pages of the paper were devoted to an excellent coronation article called "THE CROWNING OF THE KING", adorned with fine photographs of the Royal Coach, the Crown, and the Coronation Chair.

And now we come to the coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. Unfortunately, there will be no Coronation Numbers of the Gem and Magnet to make a memorable occasion still more memorable.

But Tom Merry, Harry Wharton, and Billy Bunter, - and their famous creator are still with us. And we can be sure that our favourite schoolboy characters will be celebrating the great day in their own way, and roaring out at the top of their youthful voices - "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN", - loyal sentiments in which every reader of Collectors' Digest will join them.

And many of us, on that Royal day in June, after we have watched the procession from our seats in the grandstands or on our television sets, and paid our respects to our beautiful and gracious Queen, will relax in the pages of the old Gem and Magnet and join the royal family of schoolboys in their adventures as related by the Prince of Story Writers.

# OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

## LONDON SECTION

The famous study at "Cherry Place" was quite full on this the latest meeting to be held here. Popular chairman Len was back in his accustomed place and it was his delightful task to welcome Don Webster of the Merseyside branch. After the usual formalities chair was taken by Don who read out the reply that was to be sent to the A.P. on the poor response to the request for the republication of the "Magnet" etc. He invited one and all to the 2nd anniversary of his club and then proceeded to conduct a very fine quiz that he had brought with him. Popular Ron Crollie, making one of his occasional visits was the winner and he was suitably rewarded by Don giving him a "Gem" and Robby a photo of one of Arthur Clark's drawings. Second in the quiz was Bob Blythe and third Len Packman. One of Eileen Whiter's bumper feeds then took place and afterwards Len resuming the chair started the discussion on the club's library. This was to be extended to all the old books and after a long debate in which all the points involved were thrashed out, the scheme was put into operation. Roger Jenkins will be Hamiltonian librarian, Bob Blythe, as can be fully understood, the Nelson Lee one and Charlie Wright will have charge of Sexton Blake and the miscellaneous. From Greyfriars came our key word for the "Eliminator", Bland of the Fifth. The home team won as Eileen was first with Bob and Ben in the second place.

June meeting will be held in the famous Packman sanctum at 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22. on Sunday June 21st.

Thus a company of 22 enjoyed a very full and happy meeting.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

\* \* \* \* \*

## NORTHERN SECTION

239 Hyde Park Road, May 9th, 1953

J. Breeze Bentley opened to a good attendance, expressing pleasure at seeing Harry Stables who had been absent through illness from the April meeting.

Gerry Allison, owing to the unavoidable absence of secretary

Norman Smith, read the minutes of previous meeting, followed with his usual gratifying treasurer-librarian report, gave news of a proposed Manchester trip, then put on an Elimination Quiz; as the Chairman remarked, an Allison evening.

Regarding the Manchester trip, Gerry said that with the co-operation of members in Lancashire, it was hoped to have a get-together in a few weeks time, probably on a Sunday. There was a good train service from Leeds which would allow for several hours in Manchester, yet allow everyone to be home in decent time.

Now Lancashire - and Cheshire - it's up to you. Lets have a reight good do. We won't fall out even if Lancashire has beaten Yorkshire by an innings in the meantime. Write to Gerry about it.

After refreshments, the chairman in his own inimitable way read some very amusing chapters from some red-cover Magnets. They were vastly enjoyed, judging by the laughter which was heard in the room.

Now there's an important and rather unwelcome announcement regarding the next meeting. Owing to the room not being available before, it will have to be on June 27th, the fourth Saturday. Seven weeks between meetings. Phew!

H. LECKENBY, Northern Section Correspondent.

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### M I D L A N D   S E C T I O N

Meeting, May 18th. I don't think that we have ever had a more thoroughly informal, (not to say unorganised!), meeting than this one; yet withal very pleasant and enjoyable, and very well attended on a soaking wet night.

Curiously enough, it being the annual business meeting was the main cause of the informality; because we spent most of the evening discussing club matters and the outlook.

We had begun formally enough with the minutes, and then the chairman gave us a detailed account the hoax and its aftermath. We were the victims of a malicious hoax last month, as most members, (except, of course, club officials,) received on the morning of the meeting, a typewritten note (in an official club envelope), stating that the meeting was postponed for a week.

One of our expected visitors, Mr. Chapman of Reading, also received a telegram, and a confirmatory telephone call, advising him that the meeting was cancelled.

These were all in the chairman's name but were of course bogus. The police have made very searching investigations.

Very fortunately a valued lady member decided to telephone a message she wished to give the chairman's wife thus revealing the hoax at an early stage. Mrs. Corbett promptly telephoned and telegraphed members, and thus reduced tremendously the harm intended by this unspeakably mean trickery, which reminds one of Pon & Co!

Our lady members are always a tower of strength to the club, but never have we been rendered so valuable a service as this.

After the report by our chairman on this we proceeded to elect the committee for the ensuing year, and after a report from our worthy treasurer, discussed such matters as library developments, rambles, outings, and developments generally, and now look forward tremendously to a year of very fruitful activity.

EDWARD DAVEY.

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MERSEYSIDE SECTION

May 10th, 1953.

The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m. to another large attendance, no less than twenty members being present. The formal business was quickly disposed of, in order to leave ample time for a talk by our guest speaker, Sir Frederick Bowman, K.S.C. And what a treat this turned out to be! We were all aware of Sir Frederick's many and diverse interests and accomplishments; he is the publisher of a number of cinema trade journals, has produced and acted in many plays in Liverpool theatres, but, most important of all, from our point of view, he is an ardent admirer of the old boys' papers, for which he wrote innumerable stories, both complete and in serial form. The proof of this was displayed in the large number of books which he brought along for our delight, and - may I say? - envy. These ranged from an extremely early copy of "Comic Life" to papers of a comparatively recent era, such as the "Thriller", and as varied in their nature as one could wish for. Who, then, could be more qualified to give us a talk on our beloved hobby than Sir Frederick, and who, among those present, was less than enthralled during the ensuing hour? Sir Frederick took us back over the years to the days when boys' books were boys' books, and not trash, and

spoke of the influence they had in the shaping of his life and career; an influence for good which is, alas, absent in the majority of boys' books of today.

We were most interested in the speaker's experiences as a writer for "Fun & Fiction" and many other publications, and many and familiar were the names brought up in the talk, such as Hamilton Edwards, Gwyn Evans, Garrish, and a host of others. Sir Frederick recounted a number of amusing anecdotes, revealing a dry sense of humour which endeared him to the audience, and it is regrettable that space forbids the telling of one story concerning Laurel & Hardy (with whom Sir Frederick is a lifelong friend) and Weary Willie & Tired Tim, of "Chips" fame.

All too soon the talk came to a conclusion, and I know I am not making any extravagant claims in saying that every member of the company could, like myself, have listened for another hour, and like Oliver Twist, wanted more. I make no apology for devoting so much space to this talk, but it transformed the usual meeting into a red letter night, and I should like to take this opportunity to thank Sir Frederick once again for an evening which will be long remembered by all.

Norman Pragnell's quiz was an excellent effort, which was won by Jack Morgan, with Mr. Bartlett hot on his heels. The latter will supply the posers for the June meeting.

After refreshments the library business was dealt with, and the meeting ended at 11 p.m.

F. CASE. Secretary.

# BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

Sexton Blake enthusiasts will probably be surprised to find this section of the Collector's Digest has been taken over by me.

I feel, therefore, that before going any further, a few words of explanation are due.

It will not be giving away any secret when I say that I have known of my predecessor's difficulties for some time, difficulties primarily in connection with his business which have resulted in

the amount of time to devote to Blakiana being inadequate. Other factors, such as lack of material have added to his worries, but there is no gainsaying the fact that time is a necessity for such an undertaking, and Maurice, for some months now has just not had the time.

Knowing the situation and being a Blake enthusiast I pondered over the situation, and then put the following questions to myself.

- (1) Did I possess sufficient qualifications to justify me offering to take over Blakiana?
- (2) Would I receive the necessary support?
- (3) Assuming no one else volunteered, how would Herbert Leckenby view it?

The answer to the first question seemed all right. I have the time and, I believe, a good knowledge of Blake lore.

As for the second, the answer would remain to be seen; but it is obvious to anyone, that without your articles nobody can make a continued success of it!

The third answer would only be known by putting the question to Mr. Leckenby - and this I did, asking him for a frank reply.

His answer was most gratifying - not to say complimentary - and as a result, I have taken the plunge.

Since then the groundwork has been covered and the necessary arrangements made in regard to the 'deadline' for the delivery of Blakiana, all ready for the Agency to work on.

So much for the explanatory introduction. Now to get down to Blakiana itself.

My desire is to see this section of our magazine take its rightful place as one worthy of the space allotted us, and it is my intention to fill the pages with articles, features and items of general information. Some of the items may at times be known to a few of you, but they will be inserted as being considered of interest to all readers.

The articles will cover a wide variety of themes pertaining to Sexton Blake (not forgetting Tinker and Pedro), and I welcome letters containing suggestions and criticisms, all of which will receive a prompt reply. Above all, I welcome your articles. Remember, Blakiana is your section and, given your support, I intend to make it a feature of which we may justifiably be proud.

JOSEPHINE PACKMAN.

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CHARACTER FEATURED STORIES IN THE SEXTON BLAKE (3D) LIBRARY

By RONALD E.J. ROUSE

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The Golden Years of the Sexton Blake Library are surely those between 1915 and 1941, and it is very unlikely that we Blake fans will ever have the good fortune to read anything like them again. All those fine characters whose exploits we once revelled in are now, alas, no longer to be found in the pages of the S.B.L. How eagerly and with what intense interest we used to read of their escapades, either in league with Blake and Tinker or as their most bitter adversaries.

Many of these characters had disappeared by the early 1930's, and quite a few character stories published from then onward to the end of the second series were merely reprints.

Quite a number of these character stories appeared at regular intervals throughout the entire length of the first series and for some years in the second series, including in the latter such as the Hon. Reggie Purvale, created by John G. Brandon, Captain Dack and his first-mate Sam Tench by John Hunter, and the well known Raffles by Barry Perowne.

Leaving this period and returning to the very beginning, let us take a look at the character featured stories in the 3d issues of the Sexton Blake Library.

The first, featuring Middle. Yvonne Cartier, was that much sought and very scarce S.B.L. No.1, "The Yellow Tiger". Aably assisted by Blake and Graves, Yvonne brings to naught the evil machinations of that unscrupulous pair, Wu Ling and Baron Beauremon.

In the very next issue we have Professor Kew and his lieutenant, Count Ivor Carlac, in an exciting story entitled "Illgotten Gains" (or "The Secret of Salcoth Island"). In this story we find Kew and Carlac escaping from Laidstone prison, where they had been confined through the efforts of Blake.

In No.3. "The Shadow of His Crime" (or "Hounded Down"), we meet that Prince of Spies, Ezra Q. Maitland and his partner in crime and lawful wife, Broadway Kate.

The next issue, "The Rajah's Revenge", finds Kew and Carlac well to the fore in a fine story of London and India.

As the title "Midst Balkan Perils" (or "Sexton Blake in Serbia") suggests, Blake faces many hazards in (cont'd page 178).

# ADVERTS

BOUND VOLUMES Red Magnets 205-229; Blue Magnets 435-468; Penny Populars 40/76; ditto 489/541; Union Jacks 1370/1393; ditto 1394-1415; Robin Hood and Little John. 36 parts bound Coloured Engravings, numerous woodcuts.

Loose Magnets suitable for binding, complete 52 copies for years 1933, 1937, 1938, 1939 and all for 1940 that were issued. Loose Union Jacks suitable for binding, 52 copies for each year 1922 - 1932, complete run 11 years. Sold in 26 and 52 lots only. Loose Gems suitable for binding, complete year's 52 copies, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, also 595-620. 18 numbers mint 884-905. Greyfriars Heralds suitable for binding 36 - 51 MINT. Collectors Miscellany 1-20 bound, also 1-24 loose, Collector's Digest complete file, 78 copies. Greyfriars Holiday Annual, 19 volumes between 1921-1940. Parcel Mixed Comics 1890-1920. All have pieces cut out, the reason for this being competitions, sold very cheap; details to anyone interested. Tyburn Dick 51 parts, beautifully illustrated, handsomely bound. The Young Apprentice 64 parts, ditto.

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**WM. MARTIN**

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FOR SALE. Good condition, Reasonable prices: Gems 1907-8; Union Jacks 1905-29; Boys Friends; 2d; Thrillers 1929-36; Detective Weeklies, Sexton Blake Libs, Young Britains, 1d Popular No.1, Champion No.1; Black Bess No.1; Penny Pictorials (with S.Blake stories) 1909; Black & White 1 vol.1902; The Trial of Palmer the Poisoner, Vanguards, Comic Libs. 1912, Chums 1928-9, Nelson Lees 1918-21, St. Jims Plucks, few pre-war Film Mags and Annuals, Also hundreds of modern detective and mystery mags (6/6d doz.) & Saucy Mags, Hank Jansens, etc. etc. Fashion Plate Books (col.) and coloured Sporting Prints. EXCHANGES CONSIDERED, THOUSANDS IN STOCK. S.A.E. State requirements. ROUSE, 3 St. Leonards Terrace, Gas-Hill, Norwich.

FOR SALE: One complete year of 1939 Magnets in excellent condition. Also odd numbers of the Magnet 1933-40 and Gem 1938-40 Nelson Lees also available. Write C.L. LETTEY, 27 Heather Close, Kingswood, Bristol.

# ADVERTS

WANTED TO BUY OR EXCHANGE: Magnets (a) 413, 422, 437, 443, 445, 446, 452, 455, 456, 461, 462, 463, 467, 470, 471, 821, 822, 823, 826, 828, 829, 830, 834, 841, 843, 846, 854, 855, 858, 859, 860, 862/869, 881, 882, 906, 907, 910/917, 924, 925, 929, 958.

Magnets (b) 960/1044, 1070, 1075, 1085/1096, 1104/1135, 1149, 1154, 1157, 1158, 1159, 1161, 1175, 1177, 1184, 1194, 1223, 1226, 1229, 1231, 1232, 1233, 1234, 1238, 1241, 1267, 1270, 1309, 1421.

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Suggestions for exchanges welcomed. Please write airmail:  
Charles van Renen. Box 50. Uitenhage. South Africa.

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ADVERTISE IN THE C.D. - 1d. PER WORD

No. 5, in which Laban Creed makes his debut in the S.B. Library. This story tells of the efforts of Blake to rescue Creed's daughter from her evil father's influence. By the time we reach the end of the story, however, we find that his attempts are all in vain.

Incidentally, it may be of interest to Nelson Lee fans to know that in this issue there is also a short Nelson Lee story entitled "The Case of the Shrivelled Fingers".

We now pass on to No. 7 for the next character story, "The Case of Convict 308" (or "The Men who Changed Places"). This deals with a criminal with the uncommon name of Josiah Peak, otherwise Captain Horatio Peak. After a keen tussle of wits, Blake manages to obtain for Peak a small but richly deserved prison sentence.

Following right on the heels of this number, we again marvel at the schemes of that rascally pair, Professor Kew and Count Carlac, and are thrilled by Blake's endeavours to bring them to justice. The story is told in No. 8, under the intriguing title of "Victims of Villainy", the setting being in London and Persia.

S.B.L. No. 9, "The Merchant's Secret" simply oozes with First World War atmosphere. In this story Blake is nearly crushed to death under a huge press, and I am sure he has never been in greater peril than in this rousing battle against that Arch-spy for Germany, Ezra Q. Maitland, assisted by Broadway Kate.

On to No. 11 for our next feast of thrills. This is a brilliant story of Dr. Huxton Rymer and Baron Beauremon, under the title of "The Two Mysteries" (or "The Last of his Race"). This tale features Rymer in a more favourable light than usual - that of helping to save the lives of some of our wounded French allies.

We now pass on to No. 17, to meet that Prince of Adventurers, Basil Wicketshaw, in a thrilling tale entitled "Their Great Adventure" (or "The Mystery of Moorlands Hall"), the setting of which is in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Yet once again, in No. 19, Blake is in the direst peril, in fresh adventures against those inveterate rogues Kew and Carlac. "His Excellency's Secret" (or "The Case of the Black Valley Mine") is set in the South American Republic of Gualador, and the subtitle gives a lucid reason for the depredations of that disreputable pair of crooks.

That famous, or more correctly infamous character, George Marsden Plummer takes his first bow, as far as the S.B.L. is

concerned, in No. 24, "The Man with the Green Eyes".

Blake's old adversaries Kew and Carlac turn up again in the very next issue, an exciting yarn entitled "The Secret of Draker's Folly" (or "The Miser's Hoard").

In No. 26 we again meet Basil Wicketshaw in "The Embassy Detective", a story which also features Fenlock Fawn, detective.

Blake has a welcome change of adversary in the next number, for he pits his wits once more against Horatio Peak in "A Case of Blackmail".

S.B.L. No. 28, "Sexton Blake, Special Constable" (or "His Brother's Crime") introduces Aubrey Dexter, another fine character.

In No. 29, "The Catspaw", Blake has his hands full again with Kew and Carlac, but in this story he has the useful assistance of the Hon. John Lawless.

Now we must jump to No. 35 for the next character story, "The Half-Caste", in which the Hon. J. Lawless is featured. Incidentally, we have come to the period of the great paper shortage, the pages now being reduced to 72. (The last of the 120 page issues was No. 30; then followed 96 pages in numbers 31 and 32, and down to 72 pages as from No. 33).

The next character story, "The Diamond Sunburst", is S.B.L. No. 37, features Yvonne, and to my mind is one of the late G.H. Teed's best yarns. It is to be regretted that there were not more of this author's works in the Library at this early date.

In the next issue, "Vengeance", the Hon. J. Lawless is the character.

No. 39 features Broadway Kate in yet another grand yarn, "A Legacy of Shame".

There is no well known character in the next issue, but in No. 41 we have the first story in the S.B. Library (and the Union Jack Library) featuring Mr. Reece. Entitled "The Mysterious Mr. Reece", it is a most enthralling yarn which also introduces Dirk Dolland (The Bat) and his lady partner Middle. Miquet (The Butterfly).

We now move on to No. 43 for the next character story, "The Case of the International Adventurer" (or "An Innocent Accomplice"). This grand yarn features Aubrey Dexter, Broadway Kate and a new character, Gloria Gale.

In the next issue, "Where the Trail Ended" (or "The Shadow on Grey Tower"), Fenlock Fawn gives Blake a helping hand.

No. 45, "The Barrier Reef Mystery", is another fine story of the Hon. J. Lawless, and is also the last well known character story in the 3d Library which ran to only 46 issues.

The 4d Library continued with these character featured stories right from the very first issue, and it is to be hoped that at some future date the details will be recorded in this magazine.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE ROUND TABLE

June 1953.

(Please send "Round Table" correspondence to H.M. Bond, 10 Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

\* \* \* \* \*

Readers of the "Sexton Blake Library" will be delighted to see that our old friend Eric R. Parker has returned to illustrate the latest numbers. Early in April I wrote to the Editor of the Library asking him what had happened to Parker and if he was likely to do more work for Blake. At the same time I asked who the new artist was. This is the reply I received: Dear Sir, I thank you for your letter and am glad that you still take a keen interest in the Blake series. I, too, very much appreciate Eric Parker's work, and for the next few months you will see further excellent specimens. Any change may occur only on occasion and is entirely due to publishing arrangements. Your sincerely, The Editor, S.B.L.

This, of course, is a typical reply from the present controller of Blake publications and does not give anything away, or suggest who the fresh artist might be. Not that we are particularly interested in him, but it would be nice to know to keep our records up to date. Some future correspondence with the Editor might persuade him to tell us, in the meantime we have to be content with the knowledge that Mr. Parker is still with us and is likely to give us further examples of his unique talent. Those who take an interest in the companion volumes to the S.B.L. such as "Thriller Comics" and "Super Detective Comics" will probably agree with me when I suggest that one likely reason for the recent absence of Parker's work from the Library was due to the very wonderful work he has been doing for these strip picture volumes. This month (May) he illustrated the whole of a 64 page historical story, and it is right up to standard. He has also done a few Kit Carson

strips in recent months.

If you read "The Daily Sketch" you will have observed the new serial entitled "Sequence Sinister" which is written by five "star" authors, Michael Cronin, Laurence Meynell, Dennis Wheatley, L.P. Hartley and Geoffrey Household. The "Sketch" claim this story to be "exciting", "exclusive" and "leading the field in new ideas". Other terms such as "original" and "unique" were wrongly used, as I pointed out in a letter to the Editor, telling him of that really original serial in the old "Union Jack" contributed by Messrs. Teed, Skene, Murray and Evans - you remember - "The Next Move". I don't know if the new serial idea was suggested by the Old U.J. effort but it is certainly on the same lines, with each author taking over from the other at a crucial moment in the story. The authors concerned even drew lots as to who would be first, second etc. Just as Messrs. Teed and Co did 20 odd years ago. No reply has come to my letter to the "Sketch" - but then I suppose I could hardly expect one!

I am sure all Blake fans and readers of "The Round Table" will join me in welcoming Mrs. Josephine Packman as the new Editress of "Blakiana". I can think of nobody more fitted to take over the section and I am sure she will make a big success of the job. I am hoping to devote more time to Blake matters than I have been able to in the past and all my efforts in this direction will be devoted to helping "Jcsie" to make the Blake section the brightest feature of the C.D. May I suggest that all you Blake fans rally round and help out too. You MUST have some idea for an article or a feature, and however long or short it may be it will be welcome. And don't forget that No. 10 Erw Wen is still the address for the "Round Table". I want to make this feature a really "get together" one, so please write in as often as you like and support the "old firm".

Cheerio for now,

H. MAURICE BOND.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY

MAY ISSUES

Report by GERRY ALLISON.

Eric Parker returns as the artist this month, and how welcome he is. His work is so clean cut and strong; so exactly 'right', and a Parker cover has often yielded me more pleasure than the

story inside.

No. 287. The Case of the Naval Stores Racket. Walter Tyrer.

This month this writer gives us a good readable yarn, much better than his recent offerings. Definitely not a novelette. The only young female introduced finishes up as the body. She is described on page 18 as a girl with old fashioned ideas. She certainly had an old-fashioned name. I looked through a register of names of young women this week, and there was not a single Elsie amongst the lot.

Not much of Blake in the tale, but what there is is quite good. I liked his bit of Holmesian character - deduction on page 12, somewhat similar to the bit which appeared recently in the "C.D." (on page 89, March 1953).

I was rather intrigued about the reference to Tinker on page 46, where he is told to shadow a group of criminals. "Tinker called on the assistance he usually made use of in a case of this kind". It sounds as if the Baker St. Irregulars are still in being, but surely, they were the assistants of Sherlock Holmes. Funny!

The two English sailors were incredibly blind to what was going on, but the action was swift, and enabled one to overlook their obtuseness. But the bare-faced coincidence on page 58, which enabled Blake to solve the case was really too bad.

Tyrer says: "Then there occurred one of those strokes of fate which make life so unnecessarily difficult for even the most ruthless and clever criminal". And which also make it so remarkably easy for even the most lazy author! Still, an enjoyable yarn.

No. 288 "The World Championship Mystery". W.J. Passingham.

A new author, but no fanfare of trumpets for his opus 1, I'm afraid. If you are interested in boxing, there are some descriptions of glove-fights which you should like, but if you want a good detective tale, you had better skip the stuff between the rounds.

The story is padded out to 64 pages, but could have been told in half the space. The author uses 77 words to say why Blake knew that Mikoff was thinking; as if it mattered. (Page 24, par. 2.) And I wonder if the split infinitive on page 31 is really Tinker's.

Finally, I should like to know how the bullet which whizzed past Blake's head, managed to wound the Sergeant, who was right behind him, in the thigh! Try harder, next time, Mr. P.

## NELSON LEE COLUMN

All communications to ROBERT BLYTHE  
46, CARLETON RD., HOLLOWAY, LONDON, N.7.

First of all let me apologize to both Neil Gourley and Norman Pragnell. Owing to a slight mental aberration last month, I gave Norman credit for writing the article on the School Train series. This of course was incorrect, as that article was written by Neil. The article of Norman's I was referring to was 'For Preference - The Nelson Lee' that appeared in the March number.

Well that's straightened that out, but talking about Norman I must tell you about an amazing co-incidence that occurred recently. Whilst in London recently he paid me a visit and as he was glancing through some N.L.'s. he handed one to me with the remark that there was something in Edwy Searles Brooks chat that would interest me. On looking at the page indicated I saw that Norman had discovered an answer by Brooks to a letter I had written. Having read this piece I glanced at the next paragraph with the result that I was able to hand the book back to Norman with the remark that there was something that would interest him. For believe it or not, in the very next paragraph to the one concerning myself, was Brooks answer to a letter written by Norman! The book was 2nd N.S. No. 72 dated June 6th, 1931. Just imagine! After 22 years, the chances of such a thing happening - about a million to one I should think.

Well, I suppose your anxious to get on to the main course after that hors d'oeuvre. And what better than an article by Bill Champion. This time he discusses a Dickensian situation as treated by Brooks.

SHADES OF DOTHEBOYS HALL!

By W.F. Champion

I have been a Dickens "fan" almost from the time I could first read, and greedily devour, yearly, as a kind of Xmas ritual, "A Xmas Carol". I possess and have read the great man's complete works, but cannot recall ever having considered any page of any volume to be in any degree far-fetched or impossible. Yet, way back in 1925, I can clearly remember having considered the "Tommy Watson at Moat Hollow" series as being distinctly far-fetched and

most decidedly impossible.

Now, why was this?

The B.B.C's Sunday serialisation of one of my favourite books, "Nicholas Nickleby", prompts me to examine closely the extraordinary similarity of these two stories, the one written well over a hundred years ago, and the other at the end of the first quarter of the present troubled century.

What great difference can I find between Dickens "Wackford Squeers", and Brooks creation, the ungodly "Grimesby Creepe" — precious little: both hypocrites concealed their smug, mean, unbelievably cruel and callous natures behind a mask of genial, fatherly benevolence.

Dickens described the unhappy pupils of Dotheboys Hall thus: "pale and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, deformities with irons upon their limbs, boys of stunted growth" etc. Brooks represented the unfortunate inmates of Moat Hollow as being even more repulsive: "Some had great protruding ears or mis-shapen mouths. Two, at least, had such appallingly prominent teeth that they were practically deformed. Another boy had only one eye" etc.

At both schools the wretched pupils were unwanted children, whose parents or guardians were only too pleased to pay the fees demanded by Squeers and Creepe in order to be rid of their encumbrances. Tommy Watson, of course, was an exception. When his father became near-bankrupt and Tommy had to leave St. Franks in order to go to a much cheaper school, he chose Moat Hollow so as not to be too far from his old school and friends. Mr. Creepe, being of the opinion that having the son of a baronet at Moat Hollow would be a wonderful and cheap advertisement — or inducement to parents of other prospective pupils, cleverly threw dust in the eyes of Sir Vivian Watson, who left his son in Creepe's "loving" care with not one single element of doubt as to his future well-being.

Squeers opened all his pupil's letters and, if any contained money, calmly pocketed it under some pretext or other, thus: "Oh! said Squeers," opening a letter for Cobbey "Cobbey's grandmother is dead, and his uncle John has took to drinking, which is all the news his sister sends, except eighteenpence, which will just pay for that broken square of glass." and so on.

Now listen to Creepe:

"Now, let me see — let me see!" proceeded Mr. Creepe, producing a pair of pince-nez, and pushing them on to his great nose.

"Ah, yes! Here we are, Lloyd — her we are! Your aunt encloses a postal order for five shillings, and she trusts that you will not overlook the fact that your shoes are new, and therefore need careful treatment — "

"My shoes have been taken away, sir," said Lloyd.

"Yes, to be sure," said Mr. Creepe. "They will be kept for you Lloyd — carefully preserved. Your aunt further remarks that you must always have your eggs soft-boiled. Wonderful, Lloyd! I shall take great care over that point! Whenever we have eggs, yours shall be soft-boiled! Eh, Kirby? Eh, Tarkington?"

All the monitors roared with merriment, and Watson boiled inwardly, knowing full well that the unfortunate Lloyd would never see an egg, cooked or uncooked, while in this outrageous establishment.

"As for the five shillings, Lloyd, I shall retain it," said Mr. Creepe, calmly.

"Re-retain it, sir?" said the boy, his voice trailing.

"Good gracious! Do you imagine that I could allow you five shillings?"

"But — but it's from my aunt, sir —"

"Under the circumstances, I must appropriate this money," said Mr. Creepe severely. "Since you must have eggs, Lloyd, I have no alternative. Eggs cost money, and this postal order will help towards your breakfast delicacies for the term. Sit down, Lloyd."

Again, Squeers, who forced his boys to do all the menial work at Dotheboys Hall, including the gardening, explains his methods to Nicholas:

"C-l-e-a-n," said Squeers, "clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement." He then sets some of the boys to cleaning windows. Some more are sent out to weed the garden.

"B-o-t," said Squeers, "bot, t-i-n, bottin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When they've learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, they goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby; what do you think of it?"

Once more, over to Creepe:

"Well, my lads, we will start the day with a special natural history lesson," said Mr. Grimesby Creepe, pleasantly. "The day is fine, and there is no reason why we shouldn't take advantage of it. Indoor lessons can wait for rainy weather."

And within five minutes, almost the entire school had been supplied with spades and was busily engaged in digging up the ground at the rear of the building, while the monitors, armed with whips, smoked and maintained a close guard.

Oh, yes, those boys certainly had a tough time of it! Never a day went by, at either school, without one or more of the inmates being cruelly flogged, and most of the others being battered in a really shocking manner.

Of course, one could accuse a certain author of flagrant plagiarism, but why worry? I, for one, found Brooks version to be excellent fun — in between the floggings — always happy in the knowledge that Tommy Watson was no more than a mere mile or so from his friends at St. Franks, who would surely see that no great harm befell him.

In fact, the celebrated "Fighting-Fourth" put an end to Creepe's tyrannical reign in three months — whereas the campaign Charles Dickens started against Yorkshire schools like Dotheboys Hall, and masters like Wackford Squeers, took several years longer.

The one and only Nipper, in his sensational guise of "The Phantom Protector", ably backed by Watson, incites the downtrodden boys to Mutiny. This they do in grand style, kicking Creepe and his bullying monitors into the moat, from the icy depths of which they are forced to seek refuge in the school gymnasium.

How intensely thrilling, that last Nelson Lee of the series: "Freed From Bondage!" Creepe manages to turn the tables on the rebels, and regains control of the school. He lines up the shivering boys before him, and coldly informs them of the tortures he intends to inflict on each and every one, for having dared to strike against his authority.

In the meantime, although it is near midnight, the fourth-form of St. Franks learns what has transpired at Moat Hollow. Ancient and Modern, as one man, rise from their beds, and, under the leadership of Reggie Pitt and Nipper, arm themselves with the school fire-engine and fire-escapes before rushing off to the rescue. They fairly shoot over the hump-backed bridge that spans the River Stowe, and Handforth, in charge of the first lumbering fire-escape, excitedly sends it flying full-tilt into the gates of Moat Hollow, which bursts asunder with a terrific crash at the first blow. This crash is Creepe's death-knell! The suction-hose is speedily dumped into the muddy waters of the moat, fire-escape

ladders are put into position, and the master, along with his monitors, is once more drenched to the skin. The rebels soon have mastery of the school once more, and, shortly afterwards, Creepe is carted off by the police, to answer for his many sins.

Also, Watson's father makes a financial recovery, and Tommy is enabled to once more take his place as a pupil at St. Franks College.

So, like the fairy stories, everyone lived happily ever afterwards!

\* \* \* \* \*

Now here are the answers to last month's quiz. Up to the time of writing I've had no answers but it's early yet so I'm still hoping. Perhaps I made it too difficult. I wonder?

1. The 'Conqueror' was the desert ship mentioned in the Sahara series (O.S. 477 - 483).
2. Len Clapson found his father in Australia (1st N.S. 147).
3. In a power-station in the Congo (1st N.S. 66).
4. Violet Watson (O.S. 219).
5. The names of four caravans in the caravanning holiday series (O.S. 415-422).
6. The "Dragon" and The "Wanderer" were Fu Mow's and Lord Dorriemore's yachts respectively. (1st N.S. 12 - 19).
7. The incident occurred in Los Angeles (O.S. 428).
8. 10 miles. (2nd Northestrian Series 2nd N.S. 66).
9. In Brazil (Amazon Series O.S. 264 - 274).
10. The mad light-house keeper (Scouting Series O.S. 527).

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(cont'd from page 192).. had gone altogether.

The B.O.P. for May 1937 had a rather unusual setting for its Coronation story - the South Sea Islands. The story concerned the loss and recovery of a gold nugget named the "Crown". The story was entitled "A Health Unto His Majesty," and was written by Major J.T. Geman, who was also responsible for a biographical article "A King of Boyhood," in the same number. There was also an article on "The Coins of the Georges," by Fred W. Burgess, and another by Martin Garrick on the "Officers of the Royal Household."

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LATE NEWS: Northern Club Manchester trip provisionally arranged  
for June 21st.

THE EDWARD VII CORONATION OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND"

By HERBERT LECKENBY

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The 'Boys' Friend' celebrated the coronation of Edward VII in a big way. It appeared on Wednesday, June 11th, 1902 and was No. 53 of the penny series. It was a double number of twenty eight pages, 11 inches by 14½, with the addition of a grand coloured cover of red, white and blue. Portrayed was the king on horseback wearing a gorgeous uniform and with a crown on his head. Are kings in the habit of wearing crowns whilst on horseback? Surrounding him were boys clad in the traditional dress of their countries waving huge flags. The artist was G.M. Dodshen whose work was so familiar at the time.

The leading topical feature was a long complete story "For the King!" or "The League of the Thousand Hearts" - a story of Coronation Day. The author was A.S. Hardy.

The story told of Will Baxter, scholar at Cranleigh College. An orphan, he was only there through the good graces of an uncle who paid his fees. All the other boys and the masters had gone off to see the Coronation but poor Will had been left behind, because he could not afford to pay his fare. They must have been a hard-hearted lot at Cranleigh College.

However, he sets off to walk the thirty-seven miles to London, gets mixed up in a plot to assassinate the king and, of course, ends up the hero mainly responsible for foiling the plotters. Later the king himself comes down to the school to thank him. A naive sort of story but just the sort of thing to stir the heart of the new Edwardian age.

The editor, Hamilton Edwards, had, of course, some suitable words to say in his chat and articles were splashed all over the pages. "When the King was a Boy", "Coronation Decorations", "Britain's National Emblem", "Coronation Regalia", etc.

Apart from the Coronation features there was a real feast of reading for the Boys' Friend was then in its hey-day. Two new serials started "The Red Rapiers" by Morton Pike and "Shunned by the School" and what was to prove to be one of Henry St. John's most popular stories. In addition the continuation of "Charlie Gordon's Schooldays" by the same author, drawing towards its close; "The Missing Heir" by Maxwell Scott; "In the Service of the King"

a yarn of the navy in Nelson's day. Henry St. John again; "Foundlings of the Circus", Claude Heathcote, and "Through Trackless Tibet", one of Sidney Drew's Ching Lung tales. To end up another long complete "Frank Archer, Pit Lad" by Hamilton Edwards, and the first of a series of short completes "In the Service of the Duke".

Twopence it cost, a considerable sum for a Victorian-cum-Edwardian boy, but what a feast of reading. Is there any wonder I still vividly remember buying it, even though it happened over fifty years ago.

And now I will hand over to Bill Gander, who will tell you about another "Boys' Friend" Coronation number, nine years later, a contrast to the one I have just been describing.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE BOYS' FRIEND - Coronation Number, June 17 1911. (No. 523)

by WILLIAM H. GANDER.

\* \* \*

For the coronation of Edward VII the readers of "The Boys' Friend" had a double number with a color-printed cover. But by 1911 color-printed covers for double numbers had long been forgotten, which may have meant one of two things; the paper no longer needed the "boost" of an occasional special number with a colored cover, or it was no longer riding the crest of the wave of popularity and color-printing could not be afforded.

However that may be, the coronation of George V was marked by an issue that was quite ordinary, consisting of the regular 16 pages. Across the top of the front page is a line reading "King George Number -- New Serial Story." Below this is a specially designed title block, depicting in turn part of a procession, soldiers on horseback and a carriage; the name of the paper with Britannia added; a row of portraits, the new King in the centre with three youngsters on each side, presumably the Royal children; then a group of loyal subjects of various kinds, ranging from Boy Scouts to Red Indians.

All this took up the upper half of the page; below it is a picture illustrating one of the serials, "On the Up Road" by Malcolm Dayle.

On the "Your Editor's Den" page Hamilton Edwards leads off

with a paragraph of 25 lines in reference to the Coronation; there is a three-page complete story by W. Murray Graydon, "The Rajah's Sword," "A Long, Complete Story of Alf Hawkins and the Coronation." Finally, there is an instalment of Maxwell Scott's serial of Nelson Lee and Nipper, "Long Live the King," which had commenced several weeks earlier.

In all, not a very special Coronation Number.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now Harry Stables, one of the mainstays of our Northern Section Club carries on the good work. We should be very grateful to Harry for he was not in the best of health when he dug out these details of three past Coronations. (H.L.)

#### EDWARD VII

What must have been one of the best of the Coronation Special Numbers was the JESTER AND WONDER. It was issued about ten days before the Coronation, No. 31, dated Sat. June 14, 1902. It cost only a penny, as usual, and had the usual 16 pages. There were five pages of comic pictures, three of them printed in colours; and most of the pictures and jokes had a Coronation setting -- the King himself featuring in some of them. The Special Mast-Head design was done in three colours, red, blue and yellow, and incorporated the state-coach and horses. In the centre of the front page was a bust of the King in his Crown and Robes, backed by a Union Jack. He was smoking a cigar and reading the JESTER AND WONDER, and looked to be enjoying it. The back page, also in colour, was entitled "Wonder Magic". It consisted of a number of incomplete pictures, which could be completed by rubbing with the edge of a silver coin. For instance, you rubbed the King's bald head and the Crown appeared upon it. The blank canvas of an artist showed up as a portrait of Queen Alexandra; and a group of boys cheering wildly at nothing on the far side of a wall, after rubbing showed the King passing in his carriage. The Bunsey Kids appeared in full colour on page 4, and persuaded Happy Ike to dress up at what the artist called a Theatrical Toggery Shop, and then introduced him to Ma as the King. The final picture shows him having a terrible time between Ma's broomstick and the clutching hand of a policeman. Hubbub in full colours occupies most of page 13. The centre pages were not coloured. There were no special Coronation stories in this issue, but advantage was taken

of the occasion to launch a new serial, "London Life" by Colin Collins.

One paper from which you would have expected great things drew a complete blank, the TRUE BLUE. CHUMS did just a little bit better. A few humorous drawings was the sum of its effort; but it ran three or four Coronation competitions among its usual post-card contests. One was for the best sentence of fourteen words the initial letters to form the words Coronation Year. Another was a special offer of pocket-knives to readers abroad for the best "Loyal Greeting to King Edward VII on the event of his Coronation". Another was for the best answer to "What one thing in particular would you like the King to Do to Signalise His Coronation?".

The BOYS OF OUR EMPIRE issued Commemoration Medals incorporating the Empire League Badge, probably for League members only. At 7d each post free they were rather out of my reach; but had I had the money I should have invested it in extra "Aldines" rather than in a Coronation Medal. One Monthly part had a Colour Plate of the King and Queen; and, in the Weekly number dated Sat. June 28th, was given a free Coronation Supplement of four pages. This contained a portrait of the King and an article "Concerning the Coronation" explaining the history and meaning of the ceremony.

The BOYS' OWN PAPER also spread its material over several issues. The frontispiece to the Annual Volume is a Colour Plate of the King. Here is the programme in table form.

- |            |                             |  |
|------------|-----------------------------|--|
| May 3rd.   | Article.                    | "Omens at Coronations."  |
| May 10th.  | Article.                    | "Some Coronation Curiosities."   |
| May 17th.  | Article.                    | "Our Flags and How to Use Them."   |
| May 31st.  | Patriotic Song.             | "King Edward."   |
|            | Article.                    | "Coronation Medals."   |
| June 7th.  | Full page Humorous Drawing. | "Coronation Characters" depicting distinguished (?) foreigners "Up for the Coronation." Included were His Dusky Majesty King Wobbleywoogle, His Excellency the Sub Grand Vizier of Mihatsafezza, The Japanese Nobleman Ping Pong Pooh. |
| June 14th. | A page illustrating         | "Some Famous Crowns."  |
| June 21st. | A 2nd page of ditto.        | Full page drawing. "Fun on Coronation Day." by A.L. Tuck.  |
- A colour plate given with the July Monthly Part, showed the Ribbons of all the great "Orders" worn at the ceremony. The Weekly number for June 28th included an article explaining the above plate.

GEORGE V.

The June 1911 Captain was a special Coronation issue. It was the usual price and had no extra pages; but it had a specially designed cover by H.M. Brock, and a special frontispiece by the same artist, "Long Live the King". Then an article by A.B. Cooper "The Romance of English Coronations," illustrated by pictures of early Coronations from the Rischgitz Collection. There was also a poem "Greeting" by A.B.C. I suppose this would be Cooper also. The stamp article dealt with the stamps of the late King Edward and those of the new King. A page of humorous drawings showed the Camera Editor's efforts to photograph the procession. The "Old Fag's" Editorial gave the answers (mostly humorous) of a number of authors and artists to the question "What would I do if I were King?".

As in the 1902 Coronation, the B.O.P. spread it's material over several weeks.

Sat. May 6th. 1911. Full page drawing by T. Lamare, The Music Lesson — The King's Coronation March. Article "Famous Schools with Coronation Rights." Article "Stories of the Boyhood of King George the Fifth." Sat. May 13th. 1911. Picture of Queen Mary. Colour plate "King George and the Prince of Wales." Biog. Article. "Our Gracious King." Sat. June 10th. "The Crowns of Europe's Kings."

Chums, in the later months of 1910, offers a "Royal Penknife" for cash and coupons; it had an embossed portrait of the King on one side, and one of the Prince of Wales on the other. Then on May 17th. was offered a fine Coronation Plate in colours. "God Save Our Lord the King! The Empire's Coronation Salute." This was by Christopher Clark, R.I. This picture was offered for three coupons cut from any one issue of Chums during the next few weeks. The Coronation Number was issued on June 21st. 1911, price 1d. Page 1 had a black and white reproduction of the colour plate. Then there was a short story, "A Coronation Race", by S.S. Gordon. This told of the Coronation Day sports in a Western Canadian town. The race is won by a pony named Sailor King. In the same number was another Coronation short story "The Green Handkerchief", by Frank Howell Evans, describing an attempt on the life of the Crown Prince of Germany, who was taking part in the Coronation procession.

GEORGE VI.

By the time of the 1937 Coronation, Chums and Young England had degenerated into annuals, and the Captain (cont'd page 187).