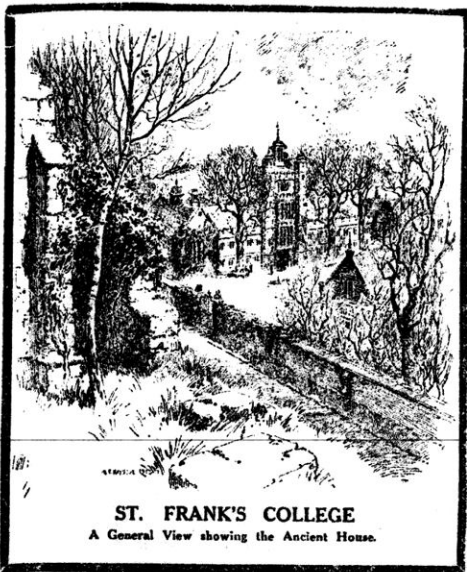


The COLLECTOR'S DIGEST

MARCH 1954

VOLUME 8, No. 87

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The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 8. No. 87

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MARCH, 1954

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



TWO VETERAN AUTHORS PASS ON: There recently died Gunby Hadath who for a great many years was in the front rank of authors for boys. He was particularly popular with his school stories. He started to write for "The Captain" in 1909 and continued to do so until its end in 1924. Later he wrote for "Chums". Practically all his serials were afterwards published in book form. Probably his best known story was "Sparrow in Search of Expulsion."

In his youth he was a well known cricket and rugby player. He rose to the rank of major in the First World War.

He also wrote many popular lyrics, including "Down the Vale," which had a great vogue. I well remember a busker who used to sing it outside the old Bradford Empire 40 years ago. It was apparently the only song he knew.

In a tribute which appeared in "The Times" Feb. 1st, "A.S.M." said he was in Gunby Hadath's form at a private school in Devon, where he was an assistant master just down from Cambridge. They started a friendship, which lasted right to Hadath's death. He concludes:

"Of irrepressible vivacity and high spirits, come weal or woe, he was one of those usually dreadful people who are "hearty" at breakfast, that meal at which the characteristic Englishman sits

dourly over his newspaper glowering upon all who make chatter, much less joke - but not upon old Gunby. I have known him burst into such a glum assembly wearing a bowler hat, boxing gloves, and Father Christmas white beard. With his passing much laughter has gone out of the lives of all who knew him; profoundest sadness descended upon his wife, who, alone able to read his handwriting, typed all his inimitable school stories and upon her twin sister, long time matron at Dulwich, who joined with them to make the happiest trio to which I have had the privilege of admission."

Gunby Hadath lived at Cricklewood but spent winter in the French Alps for many years.

He must have been in his early eighties at the time of his death.

At Torquay, just before Christmas, there also died Sidney Warwick. He was one of the very few remaining authors who wrote for the $\frac{1}{2}$ d Union Jack and its companions. One can only think of three others, Charles Hamilton, H.J. Garrish and John G. Rowe. Alas!

Along with his son Francis, he wrote a serial for the "Champion" in its early days.

* * * * *

BOUQUET: I feel I must add a word or two to what Josie Packman said last month about Walter Webb's article in that number. It was really ideal stuff with not a word wasted and packed with valuable and surprising information. I thought I knew quite a lot about the Sexton Blake authors, but I confess that the revelation that "Paul Renin" was among them was certainly something I never knew before. After that I am prepared to hear that Elinor Glyn of "Three Weeks" fame, and Victoria Cross, whose 'Anna Lombard' was read by many a girl in the seclusion of her bedroom, also wrote Blake yarns; and maybe Ethel M. Dell, for she certainly went in for strong silent men, didn't she?

Anyway as I write I'm eagerly awaiting Walter's contribution to this month's Blakiana for I am sure it will add more to our knowledge of Sexton Blake lore.

——oOo——

THE DISTASTEFUL SUBJECT: Yes, those 'Annual' subs, of course. Some responded promptly following my remarks last month, but there are still more outstanding than there were last year at this time.

I've hardly the heart to say more about it, but I'll just give one example of what is, to say the least, not playing the game.

A youthful member overseas wrote me just after the Annuals had been sent off, ordering one and saying "My father is getting me a money order for this and my long overdue subs. for the C.D." Subs overdue were for 14 months. I hadn't an Annual left, but, in view of his promise I got him a copy specially made up but thought it just as well to hang on to it until the money order arrived. Here at the end of February there is no sign of it. Well I ask you is that good enough? Let me add though that the great majority of the overseas members compare with the best.

* * * * *

A WORK OF ART: Bill Jardine has sent me quite a lengthy poem describing a cricket match between Greyfriars and St. Frank's. It is quite a clever effort; what's more I was lost in admiration (so were fellows at the Leeds Meeting to whom I showed it) with the pains he had taken over it. It was a perfect example of immaculate typing. As I told Bill he could not have taken more care if he had been submitting a novel to a publisher in the hopes that it would be a best seller.

And apart from the poem itself Bill set out the scores, fall of wickets, etc., in full detail.

The devotion of some fellows is really amazing.

Bill's poem has gone into my file for the next Annual.

* * * * *

MORE GOOD WORK: Talking of devotion there's another fellow who has been busy - Bill Lofts. Of late, he has spent days in the British Museum browsing over boys' weeklies of the past. He has found a number which did not appear in the "100 Years of Boys' Weeklies" feature in the Annual, and some amendments. I said at the time, of course, that it was not claimed to be complete.

The results of his tireless efforts will be carefully compiled, and an additional list published in the next Annual.

One interesting discovery he made, however, appears elsewhere in this issue.

- - - oOo - - -

BACK TO THE OLD HOME: Not so long ago I was anticipating being placed on the 'retired list' this summer. But there's been a change in the situation. Instead I am returning to the H.Q. Northern Command Telephone Exchange where I earned my daily bread for nearly thirty years, but from which I have been exiled in branch

exchanges for over ten.

I have had the good fortune to have got through all those forty years without one day off for sickness, and if, God willing, my health allows me to increase that gratifying record, I may be in the job for a few more years yet. What's more I shall be on night duty with probably not much call on my energies, so there will be no reason why I should not pass the hours away with matters appertaining to the hobby. I may even be able to keep pace with my correspondence.

The address for letters will be the same as before.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

My Collection

No. 2 - ARTHUR HARRIS'S

Collecting papers seemed hereditary in our family. My grandmother had quite a pile of religious papers she saved and my Mother had hundreds of ladies journals she kept week by week, so it was no wonder that when I first found out in 1902 that there were such things as comic papers published, I should start to save them. My first introduction, by the way, was wrapped round the meat I went for at a butcher's shop and was part of a "Jester and Wonder." From then onwards the "Jester and Wonder" became a firm favourite in our home and in a few weeks I was saving them. I bought a host of other comics, which were singularly enough not kept (though very much enjoyed) perhaps because I could not afford all the others every week and only bought them occasionally. These were "Coloured Comic," "Comic Cuts," "Halfpenny Comic," "Comic Home Journal," "Big Budget," "Funny Cuts," and "Larks." Two I didn't like were "Comic Life," as it generally had no reading matter under its comic pictures and was a slightly larger size and "Chips," which I rated an inferior paper!

However, the Jester and Wonder's were mounting up and when "Puck" and "Lot o' Fun" started in 1904 and 1906 respectively I commenced to collect them too. Then when World War I came with the thought as I joined the army that I might not return, I gave away my "Pucks," all but the first few copies and "Lot o' Fun's," all but the first two - a regret ever since! I couldn't part with the

"Jesters," however, for they had been with me so many years, travelling about with me and when the war was over I was pleased to find, thanks to my Mother's care, that they were still as I had left them in spite of many house moves.

Then old memories began to stir within me when I noticed in 1922 volumes 1 to 5 of "Comic Cuts" and "Funny Cuts" offered for sale in an advert. I secured these from Ireland and then with the great help of my many "Jesters" began an effort to build up a collection of comic papers, but it proved to be a very, very, slow progress. It wasn't encouraged by Joseph Parks, who, in reply to an enquiry a year or two later for "Big Budgets" said that he was afraid I wouldn't see any of those again. Years rolled on and during this last war odd copies of various comics trickled through to me and then Harry Dowler sold me some "Big Budgets" - it seemed amazing that the paper I had tried for years to get should, at this late hour, make an appearance. Shortly after this my greatest prize was presented free by the late Alf. Rick of Scarborough - two dozen copies of "The Jester" just before I started keeping them and these not only brought back memories but gave joy to my heart! Much help has been given by Herbert Leckenby from time to time and finally I was able to obtain many volumes of "Chips," which I once despised, from the executors of the late J. Medcraft.

The following are the comic papers I collect and date from 1890 to 1914 (I don't collect them after that date as I rate them utterly childish!): "Comic Cuts," "Funny Cuts," "Chips," "World's Comic," "Funny Wonder," "Larks," "Comic Home Journal," "Big Budget," "Halfpenny Comic," "Coloured Comic," "Jester and Wonder," "Butterfly," "Puck," "Lot o' Fun," "Chuckles," and my collection today reaches the 2,500 mark. It contains some I had hitherto never even heard of.

Incidentally, I hold also the largest collection of amateur journals in Britain - 10,000 of them and they date from 1873.

(I have some very interesting descriptions of collections in hand, and would welcome more. - H.L.)

THE "ANNUAL" BALLOT - Present Position

1. Red Magnet Magic 112 pts;
2. Greyfriars v. St. Jim's, 99 pts;
3. One Hundred Years of Boys' Weeklies 88 pts;
4. The Years of Conquest 86 pts;
5. The St. Frank's Saga 78 pts;
6. They Wrote of Sexton Blake 72 pts;
7. Carberry late of the Greyfriars Sixth 66pts.

HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

BUNTER IN THE LORDS: We like to record the references to the Owl in all sorts of places, and as you would see from the interesting correspondence we published last month, his name has now been heard in the august atmosphere of the Upper House. He really shouldn't have been for the peer of the realm concerned afterwards admitted that he had been in error. If he had just had a word with a member of the Lower House, Dr. Summerskill, she could have told him that Bunter's stomach was often referred to, but it was invariably in connection with things more easily digestible than bullets.

However, all ended in friendly fashion and his lordship's error did add a few more interesting pars. to the Bunter story.

* * * * *

THE SMARTNESS OF THE HAMILTONIANS: Never was there a more illuminating example of the thoroughness with which the Hamiltonians know their Greyfriars lore than in that curious affair of the story which appeared in "School Cap" No. 10. I prepared a par. for the January C.D. on this subject, and, in between writing it and its appearance in print I had quite a lot of letters from fellows saying "What do you think about this?"

Actually, F. R. often used the idea of Bunter ringing up Chunkley's Stores and, after having trouble in getting through to the right department, ordering tuck in Mr. Quelch's name. But the one to which the School Cap story was almost identical where these incidents were concerned was Magnet No. 1661 "The Prisoner of the Moat House" for here Bunter was satisfied with a Christmas pudding whereas in earlier stories he ordered a variety of eatables.

The "School Cap" being dead there's perhaps not much to be gained by rubbing it in, but I can't resist pointing out that the Sherlock Holmes historians have nothing to teach the Hamiltonians where "irregularities" are concerned. Faithful "watchdogs" indeed are they.

---oOo---

HOW'S THAT!: The "News Chronicle" recently invited its youthful readers to express their opinions on the programmes in children's T.V. Twins Faith and Oliver Shirley carefully graded theirs - one star Good; two stars, Very Good; three stars, Best of All. But they awarded "Billy Bunter" four stars! Which would seem to

suggest that they considered Billy better than best.

Two others the same day liked Bunter mainly it seems for the things he should not have done.

* * * * *

FOR EVER GREYFRIARS: Kenneth Tynan, theatre critic of the "Daily Sketch" referring to John Mills, Feb 12th, said "Clearly, he is bent on reverting to the simple fun which occupied most of his early career before the cinema seized his Captain-of-Greyfriars face and set it suffering at the helm of submarines and Antarctic cruises."

Further the South African "Forward" recently had this: "Don Cockell in spite of his 'Billy Bunter' appearance is proving no slouch in the ring."

And, just in time for mention here there was an article "What Makes a Magic Name?" in the 'Sunday Express,' Feb. 21st. The writer C. Nicholas Phipps quoted characters of fiction, screen or radio which had become household words such as Jeeves, Bulldog Drummond, Mrs. Mopp, etc. Of course, I looked for Bunter and sure enough, here he was: "And where do schoolboys wear Eton collars and little round caps, live on jam tarts, speak 1890-ish slang? Certainly not at Eton. Billy Bunter, however, still seems more like a real schoolboy than the ones we see walking or more often riding, unwillingly to school."

* * * * *

POTTED PERSONALITIES. (Second Series) No. 1

LORD MAULEVERER: It is fairly obvious that Frank Richards believes - and there is little doubt that he is right - that breeding counts and a real gentleman is born and not made. In Lord Mauleverer we have one of the finest character studies in any of the Hamilton schools.

He appeared first in early Red-cover days, when he was depicted as a lazy, good-natured, rather simple fellow with a tendency to somnambulism. It was not, however, until very many years later that the fine character, which we know so well today, was developed.

Probably Mauly's character was never more beautifully presented than in the Crum series. Crum was a rough diamond - the rather illiterate son of a circus hypnotist - and this pathetic fellow, yearning for sympathy and understanding, forced his friendship on Mauly who, with nothing in common with the showman's son, accepted the friendship, dreading to wound the sensitive outcast. This

series was in some ways akin to the Schoolboy Pug series, in which Oliver Lynn seized upon the easygoing friendship of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

In good breeding and fine gentlemanly instincts, Mauly and Gussy were similar. But Mauly was far from being a copy of Gussy. Mauly was more indolent than Gussy, but far more intelligent and possessed of powers of leadership which Gussy could never possess. Mauly, too, lacked the little bursts of obstinacy which we sometimes saw in Gussy, as well as the famous charming idiosyncrasies of Lord Eastwood's son.

Brilliant studies of Mauleverer are to be found in both the series where Harry Wharton breaks away from his friends and makes a feud with Mr. Quelch. In each of these series, Mauly was the last fellow to be estranged from Wharton, refusing to credit that the one he liked so much could be guilty of conduct of which he himself was quite incapable. These series and the Crum series reached the utmost heights in character painting, but there are many occasions when Mauly played a leading part and was invariably seen to advantage. In the Stacey series, Mauly's common-sense told him that Wharton's double was a bad lot, while on more than one occasion we read of the schoolboy earl's loyalty to his wayward cousin, Brian.

Less brilliant, but all playing their part in showing the sterling worth of Lord Mauleverer, were the stories where he bought a house to run as a school, when the Remove revolted in support of Mr. Quelch, and the travel series in Egypt - one of the lesser holiday series, which, nevertheless, had its moments. Students of this fine character will recall the Sir Jimmy series and the rather fantastic Silver Scud stories, all helping in a smaller degree to build up the composite picture of the Schoolboy Earl.

ERIC FAYNE.

* * * * *

FRIENDS IN NEED-----

By W.F. CHAMPION

Ensnconced in a comfortable armchair, I was thoroughly enjoying Roger Jenkins' extremely interesting article "Red Magnet Magic", in The Collector's Digest Annual, when mention on page 31 of a new boy, Heath, who appeared in Nos. 173 and 174, made me pause and think for a moment.

Having finished the article, I relaxed with a cigarette and had another think; after which mental strain I asked myself the

question: "Were our heroes of Greyfriars, St. Jims, etc., less loyal to each other in the early stories than they appeared to be in later years?"

I recall, exceedingly well, a rattling good series that ran in the Gem in the early twenties, when Tom Merry was accused of stealing a number of golden sovereigns from a desk in Mr. Ratcliffe's desk, in the New House. All the evidence pointed in a most damning way to poor old Tom's guilt, and, being unable to prove his innocence, he was expelled from the school.

And what happened? Did his chums and study-mates, Lowther and Manners, believe him guilty? Did his other form-fellows turn to him the cold-shoulder? No, they certainly did not! Tom, flatly refusing to be expelled or leave the school, turned up in the Shell form-room on the morning when he should have departed with ignominy and also his luggage -- and when two or three prefects came along to eject him by force, the whole form, School-House and New-House alike, rose to a man in Tom's defence. Moreover, when sounds of the ensuing rumpus were heard in the adjoining Fourth form-room, Jack Blake, Gussy, and the entire Fourth, rose in their might and rushed excitedly along to the Shell room, where the unfortunate seniors were seized and hurled outside with considerable force -- which incident I found thrilling in the extreme and decidedly entertaining. Not content with this, even the Third-formers, under the able leadership of Wally D'Arcy, were quick to take up cudgels on behalf of the popular Junior-Skipper; and thus commenced Tom Merry's famous barring-out, one of the finest stories of its kind that ever appeared in the Old Papers, which eventually ended with Tom's innocence being conclusively proved.

But how different in the sad case of Bob Cherry -- the one and only cheerful Bob, the lad whose sunny smile had been known to uplift the stony heart of a master, and who was even secretly admired by such wasters as Skinner, Snoop, etc.

When Bob was accused, years before the Tom Merry affair, of stealing a paltry ten-shilling postal-order out of Nugent's jacket-pocket, what support did HE get? Practically none.

True, here again, the evidence was most convincing: not only was the postal-order signed "R. Cherry", but the writing itself was easily recognised as being Bob's. Furthermore, when the juniors were all lined-up before the postmistress, the short-sighted Mrs. Brett stopped before he of the unruly hair and identified the

thunderstruck Bob as being the boy who had cashed the postal-order in her office.

What happened then, when the haggard-faced junior turned to his pals and asked for the support, the affirmations of faith, that I think were his rightful due:

"Oh! What can I say?" panted Bob. "It's a mistake -- it's a horrible mistake! Do you fellows all believe me guilty?"

Silence.

"Nugent, you're my chum - you've always said so -- Franky, old man, say you don't believe that I'm a thief!" shrieked Bob. Nugent groaned aloud, but he spoke no word.

Bob gave a wild glance at the boys.

The passion died out of his face, leaving it white, and drawn, and haggard, and strangely old.

"And there isn't one of you to stand by a fellow when he's down?" he muttered brokenly. "Not one!?"

"There is one, Bob." It was Mark Linley's voice, and the Lancashire lad came out of his place towards Bob. "I believe you, Bob; I know it's a horrible mistake - I know it must be. I know you're innocent, old chap."

Only one from the whole school! Compare this with the overwhelming support given to Tom Merry!

After all, one does implicitly rely on one's most intimate friends to rally round at such times, to blindly pin their faith to one who is going through a particularly bad spell.

It was found necessary to have Bob forcibly ejected from Greyfriars; and while he was attempting to gather his senses outside the school gates, Harry Wharton arrived on the scene, in the station-hack. Harry had had a few days away from Greyfriars, but having been notified of what was taking place in his absence, had dashed back to the school as fast as he could.

The Remove Captain went up one in my estimation by electing to believe in Bob's innocence, and, for the next few days, he and Linley left no stone unturned in an heroic endeavour to prove their friend's integrity.

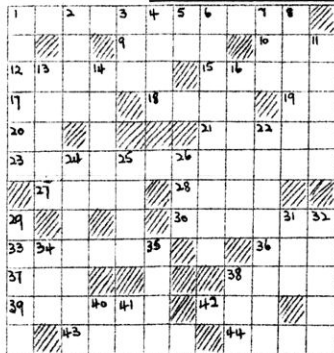
Funnily enough, and to the lasting shame of Frank Nugent, when an indignant Major Cherry arrives at the school and threatens to bring a court action for libel, for defamation of character (as any self-respecting father would) Nugent is one of the most vehement denouncers of the Major's act.

I doubt if the truth would ever have come to light had not the one and only Bunter indulged in a spot of prying in Heath's study, where he discovered several sheets of foolscap, with the name "R. Cherry" written all over them, the first ones in Heath's handwriting, and the last ones closely resembling Bob's. Whereupon, the amiable Bunter proceeded to hold the new boy to ransom.

Wharton and Linley, whose suspicions had already been aroused by the strange behaviour of Bunter and Heath, next discovered that a certain Greyfriars boy recently purchased a flaxen-coloured wig from Mr. Moses' second-hand shop, in Friardale, and begin to feel that they are really on the trail at last. In the end, they catch Heath red-handed with the wig, and Bunter is made to confess about the signatures and the blackmailing. So Bob Cherry is allowed to return to Greyfriars to take his rightful place once more in the Remove. In his happiness, he freely forgives Nugent, Johnny Bull, Brown, etc., for ever having entertained doubts as to his honesty - but one cannot help feeling that something went wrong somewhere, that Bob Cherry, of all schoolboys, should have had far more support from his friends in his hour of need.

* * * * *

THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST CROSSWORD. No. 4



Across: 1. This fellow has a double - and had a double, too. 9. Monty Newland has rather a large one. 10. A "terrible" serial in the Magnet. 12. Jack Blake did this with Tom Merry against Figgins. 15. Does he start with a fork in Study No. 6? 17. Star of 14 down. 18. Meet Kildare here in the vac. Sounds like it, too. 19. Part of England where Greyfriars is. 20. The Bounder's pal. 21. Dislike part of the Friardale cab horse. 23. Scored on the cricket field without boundaries. (Two words). 27. Colonel Wharton could be shot at

Wharton Lodge. 28. Manners' manner? Or it could be mind! 30. How James Duck felt after he was ducked in the fountain. 33. Has Nipper's gov'nor got one in Trafalgar Square? 36. A much neglected New House junior with a black outlook. 37. Sounds as though it must belong to Fisher T. 38. Mr. Leckenby to you. 39. Where Ibrahim and Kikolobo proved their worth to the Co. 42. It's Wally D'Arcy - but he'll be offended if you address him thus. 43. Bunter's at rest. Hence the noise. 44. Is this the girl at Herries' meeting?

Down: 1. Where Franz Krantz and Lagden did their dark work. But Tom Merry does it in the gym. 2. Many a Greyfriars boy has trod the road here. 3. A single man. 4. Just a knot - but not the Redwing kind. 5. Definitely describes the "Silver Scud" in more ways than one. 6. Tom, Dane, and I twice made an entreaty for another. 7. Singular clothing for the schoolboy. 8. A Greyfriars senior. (He's our choice, too.) 11. But he would appear to be Gatty's choice in the lower form. 13. It might be almost a throne for another Greyfriars senior. 14. A kiss half way through meals here for the Rio Kid? 16. Inherent. 22. "23 across" might total up to these. 24. Can be seen, on the road and on the sea, from the upper windows at Greyfriars. 25. Part of the programme; could be a mite. 26. Victory! 29. Many a one takes place behind the woodshed. 31. Bunter's appendage that Wingate sometimes seizes. 32. Kangaroo! 34. Not counterfeit money, though it's more than half spooof. 35. It's close by. 38. Hasten. 40. It's in the end of 18 across. 41. With 40 down, it's just a penny.

(This crossword is for amusement only, but to add to the fun a post-order for 5/- will be sent to the reader who submits the first correct solution opened by the Editor. Make a copy of the square, to obviate cutting your copy of the C.D.)

SOLUTION OF CROSSWORD No. 3. Across: 1 (with 27 down) Cedar Creek. 5. Lathom. 10. Hair. 11. Senior. 12. Ernest. 14. On Top. 16. Oyster. 17. Reels. 20. Urn. 22. Yore. 23. Thermos. 26. Hero. 29. No. 30. Wake. 32. Roar. 35. Robs. 38. W.B. 39. Evisage. 41. Boo. 42. Ane. 43. Reason. 45. Kildare. 46. Lady. Down: 1. Cherry. 2. Ear. 3. Dinner. 4. Are. 5. Le. 6. Another. 7. Tine. 8. Hot rum. 9. Oro. 11. Sty. 13. S.O.S. 15. Pons. 18. Eon. 19. Lex. 21. Rookwood. 23. Thora. 24. He. 25. Rows. 28. Naval. 31. Ebony. 33. (with 40 down) On sea. 34. Rind. 36. Ogre. 37. Bee. 41. B.S.A. 41. Al.

The first correct solution received came from Gerald Allison, to whom a postal order for five shillings has been sent.

The Modern School, Surbiton. 4th February, 1954.

Dear Mr. Editor,

I was most interested to read Basil Adam's excellent contribution in the latest C.D., in which he votes the "Harry Wharton's Downfall" series of 1924 - 1925 as the best set of yarns ever to appear in the Magnet. I fully agree with what he writes.

I notice that in your editorial comment you mention that this series came out first in the C.D. voting contest some time ago. This is not quite accurate. The series which came first in the contest was the one on the same theme, published in 1932.

I think that Mr. Adam, as a newcomer to our circle might be interested in "The Pick of the Series," an article which you published in March 1951 and in which those two magnificent Harry Wharton series were compared. The following is a brief extract from that article:-

"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....

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 Magnet 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 supports of that era; so tense and vivid were some of the descriptive passages that many readers would have excusable tears in their eyes as they followed the adventures of the wayward fellow who starred in the series.....

To sum up, I would join Mr. Adam in voting that 1925 series as the greatest of all.

Yours sincerely, ERIC FAYNE.

* * * * *

FRANK RICHARDS v. GILBERT HARDING

Dear Herbert Leckenby

February 20th. 1954.

I rubbed my eyes when I read the alleged quotation from my writing on Page 41 of the C.D. I lost no time in looking at Gilbert Harding's book. I need not, I hope, assure our readers that the

illiterate imbecility quoted by Harding was not written by me. If it ever appeared in print at all, it can only have been the work of a particularly stupid imitator: as I think Mr. Harding might have guessed, had he chosen to do. But I shall not believe, without proof, that the silliest of my imitators could make such a fool of himself. I have asked Harding's publishers for details to enable me to trace the alleged quotation: but have so far received nothing of the kind either from them or Harding himself. The matter is not yet at an end.

With kindest regards,

Very sincerely, FRANK RICHARDS.

(Eric Fayne said it sounded "phoney" didn't he? - H.L.)

EXCHANGE THOSE SURPLUS BOOKS FOR SOME OF YOUR 'WANTS'! MANY KINDS OF PRE-1940 MAGAZINES TAKEN IN EXCHANGE FOR O.B.B's. Motoring, Aeroplane, Film, Stage, Sporting, Fashion, Railway, Humorous, Saucy, Crime, etc. Items available include:- Magnets 1908-1920, 1934-1940, Bound Volumes 1939-1940. Gems 1907-1922, 1928-1940, Bound Volumes 1936-1939. S.O.Ls. All types. (St. Frank's 1/6 each). Meccano Magazine: Bound, Singles, 1925-1940. U.S.A. Science Fiction 1933-1940. All Sports: Bound volumes from number 1. (1919). Topical Times: Bound Volumes, 1933-1940. Football Annuals, 1924-1953. Association Football: 4 volumes, illustrated. Flying: 2 volumes, pre-war. Arthur Mee's Children's Newspaper (1920s) suitable for binding. SATISFACTION GUARANTEED. OFFERS OF BOOKS ALWAYS APPRECIATED. (Your price, usually!) S.A.E. REQUIREMENTS, PLEASE.

T. LAMBERT,

347 GERTRUDE ROAD,

NORWICH.

1d, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d, & 2d Union Jacks; Magnets, 1937-40; Boys' Magazines; Detective Weeklies; Complete rare set Jack's Paper; Young Britains; Early mint Tit-Bits; early mint vols. of Wide World; Chatterbox (mint with publisher's cover); vols. of Family Herald; etc. Magnets Gems, S.O.Ls. required. Your reasonable price always paid. S.A.E. RONALD ROUSE, 3 ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE, GAS HILL, NORWICH.

FOR SALE: 5 bound volumes "Chums". All good condition, 1905-1909 inclusive. Offers: A. MUNRO, 11 REGENT PARK AVENUE, HEADINGLEY LANE, LEEDS, 6.

WANTED: Schoolboys Own Libraries and Story Paper Collector. J. BELLFIELD, 24 GRAINGERS LANE, CRADLEY HEATH, STAFFS.

THE EDITOR WHO TOLD THE BLUNT, STARK TRUTH

By Herbert Leckenby

We have often been amused by the way editors would never admit that a paper was about to die, but told the tale that it was going into partnership with another.

Well, indefatigable Bill Lofts has been spending quite a lot of time in the British Museum of late, and among many interesting discoveries is the case of an editor who did once tell the plain, unvarnished truth. It was so unusual in such circumstances (I wouldn't for a moment suggest that editors never tell the truth at all, of course!) that it's worth putting on record.

The paper was the "Vanguard" which ran from 1907-1910, was published by Trapps, Holmes & Co., and for which Charles Hamilton wrote several stories. In the Annual "100 Years of Boys' Weeklies" list we were not sure when it finished, but Bill found that it ran at Magnet size until 137 then it announced that it would have a new editor, that its name would be changed to "Vanguard Library of Football, Sport and Adventure" and that the page size would be larger.

Alas! in its new form the paper was a failure, for it only ran from 139 to 153 (for some strange reason there was no 138) and with that last number the new editor made this announcement:

SO-LONG

I AM SORRY TO WRITE THIS MY LAST CHAT TO VANGUARD READERS, SORRY TO WRITE THE LAST LINES OF THE LAST NUMBER OF THIS PAPER. BUT IT CANNOT BE HELPED. IN THE THREE MONTHS WHICH THE PAPER HAS BEEN UNDER MY CARE I HAVE GAINED MANY NEW FRIENDS FOR IT BUT NOT SUFFICIENT TO JUSTIFY ITS CONTINUED EXISTENCE. I HAD HOPED THAT MY PRESENTATION PLATES WOULD HAVE GAINED ME TENS OF THOUSANDS OF READERS, BUT THAT HOPE WAS NOT FULFILLED. SO WITH THE CLOSE OF MY SHORT TIME OF EDITORSHIP MY PEN IS LAID DOWN, AND SO THE LAST NUMBER OF THE 'VANGUARD' PASSES THROUGH THE PRINTING PRESSES, AND FROM THIS WEEK THERE IS A VACANT PLACE IN THE LIST OF YOUR PAPERS.

SO CHUMS OF THE 'VANGUARD' - GOOD-BYE, GOOD LUCK BE WITH YOU.

YOUR EDITOR.

It was honest, wasn't it? As an editor in a modest way myself, I can understand how that editor of the long ago felt, even though he had not been in the chair for long. I hope I shall never have to write such a farewell to the loyal readers of the old C.D.

Postscript: Harry Stables tells me that the editor of Melrose's "Boys of Our Empire" also admitted it was through lack of support when it closed down in 1903.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN
27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

In order to keep Blakiana within its allotted space, this month my opening remarks must necessarily be brief.

I am still waiting to hear from readers on their favourite Blake story. How about it, you Blake fans?

I have had the good fortune to obtain what I consider to be a real 'scoop' for Blakiana - real hot news! This will appear in forthcoming issues, in the form of two articles by W.O.G. (Bill) Lofts, viz: "I Met Sexton Blake Author George Rees" and "The True Story of Gwyn Evans."

J. PACKMAN.

* * * * *

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY - FEBRUARY ISSUES

No. 305 "The Secret of Sinister Farm."

Anthony Parsons.

A solid and well constructed yarn. Murder and mayhem in Kent. The rural atmosphere was very good, but do the Kentish farmers say "carze" when they mean 'cows'? Sounds more like stage Yorkshire dialect to me.

Score up another hit for Anthony P. and if the small print becomes rather trying to the eyes, there is always the smashing blonde in the plunging neckline on the cover - definitely NOT by Eric Parker. She was a surprising specimen for thirty-five. A pity she had to be hanged.

No. 306 "The Lodging House Mystery."

Rex Hardinge.

Quite frankly, I thought this tale terrible in every way. First there was a gang of crooks who had to have an insurance agent's report before making a smash and grab raid. And what a fat-headed system of communication.

Blake was incredible. Running around on mysterious errands, apparently with his head in a sack. He spoke the truth twice, though. Page 35. "Fools that we are." Page 64. "Perhaps I'm not

clever." Agreed, nem. con.

GERRY ALLISON.

---oOo---

Continuing: SIXTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKE

By WAITER WEBB

Part Three - The Decline of Sexton Blake

It was towards the end of the year 1922 that Sexton Blake followers first became acquainted with the work of a gifted young artist, named Eric R. Parker. The latter made his debut in UNION JACK No. 995, when he illustrated Andrew Murray's come-back story "EYES IN THE DARK", which featured Professor Kew, the Hon. John Lawless, and the Owl. Under this promising newcomer's hand, UNION JACK characters began to assume a definite shape - hitherto, illustrations depicting Blake, Tinker and the rest might have been those of anybody; but the advent of E.R. Parker changed all that - the famous detective, Rymer, Plummer etc., became as easy to pick out as if they had been photographed; the caption beneath the drawing was not necessary to identify the character portrayed - sure sign of the true artist. Val Reading, by popular vote, was considered next best to E.R.P., and he submitted good material over a long period; but neither he nor E.R.P. put in such fine work as H.M. Lewis in the earlier days. Lewis's work deteriorated to such a marked extent in later years - the cause of which it is difficult to say - that it was small wonder his illustrations were seldom utilised in the UNION JACK after the war. T.W. Holmes, a regular contributor before the war, was never heard of after it; his drawings were neat without being particularly outstanding in any way. Harry Lane, Arthur Jones and Kenneth Brookes completed a team well-varied in style and talent.

An interesting conception was that of the character of Gunga Dass, an Indian crook, who was introduced by H. Gregory Hill. An utterly ruthless type, he gave Blake some of the toughest struggles of his long and eventful career. Adrian Steele, a newspaper correspondent, was Andrew Murray's next contribution to the pages of Blake's papers, and little did it occur to anyone at Fleetway House that this was to prove the author's last creation. There was also a slight increase in Sexton Blake's household, when Oliver Merland, the monocled author of "THE FACE IN THE FILM" (S.B.L. No. 281, First Series), introduced another young assistant to Blake in

Topper, a lad of about Tinker's own age.

Just before the resignation of Bonar Law, which let in Mr. Stanley Baldwin as Prime Minister, two characters were introduced who were to prove very popular for the next ten years or so. They were Gilbert and Eileen Hale, handsome ex-public schoolboy, and his pert and pretty wife; and whilst, as a combination, they were neither clever enough nor ruthless enough to have Blake going all out against them, nevertheless, there were occasions when they proved themselves thorough nuisances in the persistency with which they intruded into his investigations. Blake was apt to regard them with good-humoured tolerance rather than with any feelings of animosity.

Following close upon the death of Cecil Hayter came that of Andrew Murray, who died from paralysis. The latter's last story was published in the UNION JACK early in 1924, entitled "THE SIGN OF THE YELLOW DRAGON", and that was the last time Blake readers heard of the Owl. But the ranks of the crook fraternity were in no way diminished, for the Black Eagle came along to slip into the shoes of the departed. The year 1924 was, of course, notable for the reason that Gwyn Evans made his debut as a Sexton Blake writer.

A disturbing feature about that time was the importation of crime fiction into this country from the U.S.A. These magazines began to trickle through in small quantities at first, but had grown to quite alarming proportions by the 1930's, and, as may be imagined, English publishing firms took some very hard knocks as a result. Under that growing avalanche from America both the UNION JACK and SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY did not escape unscathed; in the case of the former there was a definite falling-off, and for the first time the decline of Sexton Blake was made apparent. That state of affairs was lamentable, for whilst the Blake publications contained clean and wholesome matter, the atmosphere of the American type was altogether different. Emphasis - and far too much of it - was made on sex. The purely adventurous type of story set in countries overseas, stories that almost brought the smell of the soil and heady odours of its nature life to the nostrils, in the imagination of its reader - the Lobangu and Huxton Rymer tales are an admirable example - were on the way out. In their place was drifting the American model, in which there was that akin to the perfumed atmosphere of milady's boudoir.

There were other distractions too, which had the effect of

diverting the mind from the printed word. In November 1922 broadcasting from the famous London station 2LO on top of Marconi House in the Strand began; and as the radio entered the homes of more and more families it was only natural that a number of readers would feel compelled to devote their limited leisure time to their new love. By 1926 the tempo of our national life had been speeded up considerably, the new sport of Greyhound Racing was attracting bigger gates with each meeting, and dancing had never been so popular. Then, a little later, talkies began, and when the first all-talking picture, *The Singing Fool*, was shown in London, every attendance record was broken. It was another nail in the coffin of the old boys' papers, for by now teen-agers had so many other interests to occupy their minds that there was left little inclination to follow further the adventures of those heroes who had thrilled them in their schooldays.

That inflexible grip which Sexton Blake had for so long sustained on the imagination of his public was visibly relaxed, and in a desperate effort to restore him to his former pinnacle, the Confederation series - the most popular Blake series ever - were re-printed in the UNION JACK. But times had greatly changed since 1919, and the old appeal had gone; the reception afforded them was but lukewarm, so the venture could hardly be described as a successful one.

As Blake's popularity waned, new authors were commissioned in an effort to infuse new life, for the old team, if their work was anything to go by, were becoming jaded, and seemed in need of a prolonged rest away from their typewriters. An interesting new arrival was Gerald Verner, the famous novelist and creator of Mr. Budd, of Scotland Yard, who wrote all his Blake stories under the nom-de-plume of Donald Stuart. A most welcome recruit, for his work was always of a high standard. Fleetway House was mourning the loss of one of its great personalities, John Nix Pentelow, at the time Gerald Verner made his bow as a chronicler of Blake's exploits.

Three years later William Murray Graydon, who next to G.H. Teed wrote more words of Sexton Blake than any other writer, announced his retirement. Over 30 years of continuous writing had left visible signs on the veteran author, whose later work clearly indicated to what extent his early enthusiasm and pride in his work had dimmed. A number of the old characters had dropped out by

that time, but in 1930 that popular and unusual creation, Mr. Preed, the solicitor-detective, came along to assist Sexton Blake in the ever-ending battle against crime.

The SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY was still progressing fairly satisfactorily, but the UNION JACK had now to combat a new weekly rival in THE THRILLER, a really fine paper, which printed stories by writers whose names in the fiction world will never be forgotten, men such as Edgar Wallace, Sydney Horler and Leslie Charteris, and was finding the going anything but smooth. New ideas were needed, for it was clear that drastic changes would have to be made if THE THRILLER'S challenge to the UNION JACK'S position of being the best detective-thriller weekly on the market was to be resisted. In H.W. Twyman, the UNION JACK had an editor who was fully alive to the danger into which the paper was drifting, and, in an effort to steer clear, he conceived the Proud Tram Series, and invited six of his most popular writers to take part in a friendly competition, in which he asked them to explain how a heart failure victim and the unconscious form of Sexton Blake happened to be on top of an empty tramcar in a North London tram depot. A broken window; a rolled-up banner on the floor and a fireman's helmet were other things that they were asked to account for in a story giving a properly feasible explanation of the circumstances that brought the whole thing about. The six authors who readily accepted this sporting challenge were G.H. Teed, Anthony Skene, Robert Murray, Gilbert Chester, Gwyn Evans and Donald Stuart. Robert Murray, however, found the task beyond his powers, and a last minute S.O.S. was sent out to E.S. Brooks to make up the team, the explanation being that the Confederation author had caught influenza. Coming along with something better than anything he had ever done for the NELSON LEE LIBRARY, E.S. Brooks romped home a comfortable winner when readers were asked to submit their opinion as to which one of the six had contributed the best story.

(The concluding chapters of this fine article will appear in next month's Blakiana. - J.P.)

* * *

(I have a notion that all the Blake fraternity will cordially agree with this letter which appeared in the "Glasgow Herald". - H.L.)

SEXTON BLAKE

Baker Street, London.

Sir, - In the report in "The Glasgow Herald" of an exhibition of periodicals at Baillie's Institution, Glasgow, the following

sentence occurs:- "The more abandoned (children) revelled in the adventures of Dick Turpin, Sexton Blake, and similarly unedifying sagas."

I most emphatically protest at my beloved chief being classed with that rascal Turpin; and as every Blake case is a triumph for law and order, I simply cannot understand your reporter's reference to "unedifying sagas." In fairness to the name and fame of that very great man, Sexton Blake, I hope you will print this letter. - I am, etc.,

TINKER.

NELSON LEE
COLUMN



By JACK WOOD
NOSTAW, 328 Stockton Lane,
York.

Before, as promised last month, I put Edwy Searles Brooks "under the microscope," may I take this opportunity of urging no neglect of this column next month! I hope then to give you not only the completion of Bill Champion's excellent article on Conspirators Unlimited! but also first details of our stupendous, colossal Summer Competition. It will be the best ever, and I hope all Leeites will rally round and make it a great success. Three prizes will be offered for but I mustn't give the secret away yet!

Back to the present, however. Edwy Searles Brooks! What happy memories are recalled of the familiar dramatic stories, and how much, looking back, we can see he was ahead of his time. I wonder how many of you read in the Daily Mirror last November the story of a New Guinea tribe whose womenfolk keep the men as slaves, and have "discovered an amazing new method of illumination."

Their country was deep in an unexplored valley, and, reported a lighting expert, Mr. C.S. Downey, in a lecture to traffic officers in Pretoria: "Traders report that, when near this valley at night, they have seen many strange suspended moons shining down on the villages with great brightness. They appear to be large stone balls, about 12ft in diameter, and mounted on stone columns."

Compare Brooks on the town in The Modern Eldorado (O.S.269), dated July, 1920. - "On either side of the wide thoroughfare there were giant pillars - massive marble affairs, nothing less than 200ft in height. And at the summit of each pillar there danced and shimmered a great ball of fire - a flaming ball of orange-coloured light. This light was so intense that it illuminated the whole district in the immediate vicinity of the pillar....the whole city was a blaze of orange fire."

A week or two ago, the U.S. Patents Office announced the patenting last year of a spanking machine.... a device which I'm sure the chums of the St. Frank's Fourth will recall from their unhappy experiences at the hands of the Remove on one occasion!

In Jan, 1949, the News Chronicle announced the formation of Youth Travel Ships Ltd., with a distinguished management council, to provide school children and young people with the chance to travel abroad by land, sea and air. Shades of the School Ship and the School Train!

Even a leading scientist shortly after the stories appeared suggested that such an Arctic "oasis" as Brooks had pictured in Northestia might exist, and this year, I believe, an exploratory expedition is going to investigate Antarctica. Maybe they, too, will find New Anglia!

But, let others carry on the Brooksonian "research"....

* * *

E.S. BROOKS AS A SPORTS WRITER

By C.H. CHURCHILL

One of the aspects of E.S. BROOKS which I do not recollect having been mentioned very much was his ability to describe sporting events convincingly. In my opinion he gave us instances without number of his prowess in descriptive writing of all kinds of sports. There were quite a number of matches described in a very interesting and convincing manner. As the various games came to be played he developed his ideas. For example, we read how Handforth, at first considered a "dud" gradually blossomed out as a

first class goalkeeper.

I think, however, that the best of all his sports writing was in 1921. During this year we had the Ernest Lawrence boxing series. Here he gave us descriptions of many boxing contests in which Lawrence took part. These were all very well written and I can remember how enthralled I was at the time when reading them. Brooks too, took "time off" during this series to give us a very good write up of a Paper Chase! (O.S. 299 "The Housemaster's Hate.")

In the spring of 1921 we had a Cricket series all about the arrival of Jerry Dodd. For reasons of his own (or rather of his father) Jerry pretended to be very poor at the game. When found out (by Handforth) he played for the Remove team at first in disguise and later as himself. Again Brooks described these matches with a wealth of detail and in a very convincing manner.

In the autumn we had a Football series about Reggie Pitt. We read how he played for the Bannington club in the Football League and more than held his own in this august company of footballers. I think the best description, however, of a football match was in O.S. 336 (The Fifth at St. Frank's) when Pitt having finished with league matches returned to the school team and played a brilliant game.

Sometime after, in 1923, we had a "single" boxing story about Mr. Clifford (O.S. 397 "The Boxing Unknown"). Here again Brooks gave us a vivid account of the boxing. In No. 489 (during the "Trying Times at St. Frank's" series) Ernest Lawrence was again to the fore at boxing. Once more all the thrills of the ring!!

"The Mystery Goalkeeper" (O.S. 497) was another good football story telling how Doris Berkeley's brother played for the River House against St. Frank's. This was much to the consternation of the boys who thought it was Doris playing!

We had another cricket series in the spring of 1925 when Fenton opened the First Eleven door to anyone in the school, senior or junior. Here, too, some splendid reports of cricket.

In the first New Series there were many more instances of first class sports writing. This series commenced with the "Sports Mad at St. Frank's" stories which quite a number of Lee fans consider to be one of Brooks' best.

Maybe he did make his schoolboy characters do rather impossible things at sports, such as Jerry Dodd playing in the Tests, Lawrence defeating grown up men at boxing etc., but, as someone said

recently in the C.D., this showed how good Brooks was at child psychology, and with this view I heartily concur!! Do not forget that the stories were written principally for boys!

In conclusion I must say that I consider Brooks to have NO EQUAL in this sphere even when thinking of such wizards of the pen as Charles Hamilton and Jack North. I now sit back and await brick-bats, blasts and "rockets" from our friends "THE HAMILTONIANS."

* * * * *

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

By H.E.B.

.....an Appreciation

It is not easy in one short article to sum up the chief characteristic of a writer of Edwy Searles Brooks' ability, but if one may be mentioned which is specially applicable to him, it must surely be his ability to dramatise plots and situations that, in less efficient hands, would result in far less convincing narrative.

In particular, I recall some of those remarkable series of his, between 1923 and 1927 (vintage years in many ways!) when you had to be 'sure to order your copy' so keen was the demand for the Nelson Lee. Strangely enough, the N.L. was quite often 'accepted' by some of the more critical grown-ups as being a 'better' class of juvenile literature than most of the other boys' papers published at the time, not even excepting our dear old friend - the MAGNET. This may have been due to some extent to the Dickens - Verne - Conrad and sometimes W.W. Jacobs touches which he gave now and then to his stories, and thereby pleasing a wider audience, so to speak. Lest any reader should accuse him of copying any of their styles, it should be borne in mind that it is virtually impossible NOT to encroach on a situation or way of presenting it which has not been treated before by someone or other. Nevertheless, when he describes a tropical thunderstorm, it is there in all its fury in the same graphic manner that he presents the solitudes and desolation of an arctic waste.

He could create a city of the past or a city of the future with equal facility, or even build them on distant planets (Jollywood please note!) yet with his feet firmly on the ground, as with his American tour, his articles were quite forthright, and full of commonsense information.

As a popular writer, he made attempts by correspondence columns to find out what his readers wanted; whether they preferred longer or shorter series, or the separate stories, which characters, or set of characters they liked best - and so forth. Few authors take THAT much trouble! All in all, E.S.B. gave us some very enjoyable times, and many of us still prefer our impressions of him as they were in our youth, rather than the analytical study we could make of him now, a process from which alas! few authors would emerge with everything to their credit.

It has been said that E.S.B. did not make use of classroom scenes as much as he might have done, but who can blame him? Authors must live, and with the enormous output of school stories from Frank Richards alone, he obviously had to do something different, although he could, and did, use the classroom when it was incidental. He may not have written so much about boys in school as for boys at school, who probably found that quite enough. There are no stories of adventure published today on similar lines which are equal to them, either in their 'infinite variety' or the excellence of their literary style.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

L O N D O N S E C T I O N

Next meeting of the club will take place on Sunday, March 21st, 3.30 p.m. at "Cherry Place", 706, Lordship Lane, Wood Green, LONDON, N.22.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

* * * * *

(Note: Regretfully the Dinner arranged by the London Club for February 20th had to be cancelled, so there is no report this month. - H.L.)

N O R T H E R N S E C T I O N

13th Feb: 1954. We were particularly pleased to have Charles Auckland, of Sheffield with us once more, but some of the regulars were unavoidably absent for various reason.

Treasurer Gerry Allison reported that cash in hand amounted to

£16.3.6. and read some extracts from his correspondence.

I explained that owing to changes in my duties I shall have to leave the meetings early in future, but I shall endeavour to attend if only for an hour. I shouldn't be able to settle on my job with the thought that I was missing a meeting altogether.

J. Breeze Bentley ably deputised for Gerry Allison (who had a cold) in the reading of the dramatic, final chapters of "The Boy Without a Name." Due to unforeseen circumstances the instalments have not followed each other as regularly as one would have wished nevertheless the story has been thoroughly enjoyed.

Next meeting, Saturday, March 13th, when we hope to have Roger Jenkins with us once again.

-----oOo-----

MIDLAND SECTION MEETING

-

15th February

Our numbers were unwontedly small this evening; in fact we had almost as many apologies for non-attendance as we had members present; receiving apologies for absence from five ladies and two gentlemen. Unhappily winter ailments were very rife, although there were one or two cases of pressure of business etc. We hope most sincerely that the invalids are fit and well again now. Their full recovery should be assisted by Spring which, (we hope!), is only just round the corner. As the poet remarkably observes, "If execrable Winter comes terrifically, can the esteemed and beautecus Spring be far behind?"

Under the circumstances we had a very informal but enjoyable evening discussing many items of interest and plans for the future. It so happened that there was quite a lot of formal business as after the minutes had been disposed of, the Secretary referred to three very interesting letters which had been received just lately from the other clubs and one from Mr. Down (formerly Editor of the good old "Magnet").

Everyone present took part in the interesting discussions which arose both from these letters, and various ideas and plans put forward concerning the club.

The evening went very quickly amidst all the animated and sparkling discussion, but we left ourselves time at the end for a library session and farewell chat, during which a great attraction was the offer for sale of sets of the "Magnet".

EDWARD DAVEY. Hon. Sec.

MERSEYSIDE SECTION- 14th February, 1954

There was a remarkably good attendance at this meeting, and the chairman welcomed another new member, Mr. I. Rhodes, whom we were all very pleased to meet.

After the Secretary had submitted the financial report, the chairman dealt with a number of section and club items; he was pleased to say that a further supply of Magnet series had been purchased for the library. He also told us, to our pleasant surprise, that a member, who wished to remain anonymous, had donated the sum of one pound to be expended on the purchase of books, the choice of which was to be left to the chairman's discretion. The result is that we now possess a number of "Union Jacks", in mint condition.

After refreshments, we proceeded to the team quiz, which followed the pattern of the one so much enjoyed at the Jan. meeting. The teams on this occasion were larger, however, and this had the effect of making competition keener. Time was the enemy, and we had to make do with three rounds, instead of the intended six; nevertheless we had a really good time, and the result was very close indeed, the winning team just getting home by $3\frac{1}{2}$ points (58 $\frac{1}{2}$ pts to 55).

Next month there will be an open discussion on subjects to be brought up by Don Webster and Jim Walsh, and this promises to be very entertaining.

The meeting closed at 10.30 p.m., all to soon for most of us, alas - but "bus and tream wait for no man!" (Shelley).

F. CASE.

LATE NEWS: The new Bunter book "Billy Bunter the Bold" is to be published March 11th; a review will appear in April C.D.

Can anyone give me the full address of Mrs. Peggy Cranmer, who had a letter "relative to Bessie Bunter," in "Radio Times" (or possibly "The Listener") about last October?. (MRS.) VERA NICHOLLS, 44 GROSVENOR PLACE, LEEDS, 7.

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