

The COLLECTOR'S

Vol. 8, No. 89. MAY, 1954.

DIGEST



CAPTAIN

Robert
Whiter, 54

JUSTICE

Price 1s.6d.

The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 8 No. 89

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MAY, 1954

Editor,

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

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

ITS IN THE NEAR DISTANCE: This is No. 89, so within a year, if all goes well, we shall have reached our century. As I have been told more than once already we shall have to celebrate that with a real bumper number. A lot could happen in the meantime, of course, still its surprising how time passes.

Well, you know, to be just about to enter the 'nervous nineties' as they have it in cricket, is no mean feat for a magazine like ours, so many which do not claim to be professional fall by the way long before that. And I am proud of the fact that never once has it really been late in making its appearance, not even on that memorable occasion early on when I lost a big proportion of the copy in a flood when taking it to the duplicating agency, and sat up all night rewriting it. Yes, indeed there have been some stirring episodes since I first looked so fondly on that modest little No. 1.

Each month as I have mailed the last of the packets I have given a sigh of satisfaction and thought it a job well done. But I should have been pretty helpless without that loyal band of contributors who through the years have never let me down. Never once have I been short of copy, something really remarkable to say the least.

Well, there's nothing like taking time by the forelock, so in the few remaining months before 'the day' we must get down to planning a No. 100 that will be talked about for many a day.

* * * * *

THE NAME'S THE SAME: 'The Times' on April 6th, revealed that Mr. Nelson Lee had gone bankrupt!

* * * * *

CONTRAST: Of late months it has been my lot to report somewhat despondently that a number of fellows owed for the Annual (half-a-

dozen still do) but now I feel I must comment on an event which is very much the other side of the story.

A few weeks ago Ronald Hunter, out in Brazil wrote me saying he had not received his Annual. As he had received the January C.D. he was very much afraid the Annual had gone astray. He wrote in the hope that I had another copy for which he would gladly pay again, but as he was coming home for a holiday shortly he asked me to send it to his London address. Fortunately I had a copy, just one. I wrote him saying I thought it would be fairer if we shared the cost. He replied declining my offer, in fact very much to the contrary he sent £1, and, well, I won't repeat the kind things he said about my activities; I'll only say I appreciate them very much indeed.

Then there was the case of Mr. Orr of Dumbarton, a substantial sum he sent me for subs. never reached me; yet he would insist on paying again. There have been other instances where fellows have paid more than their share.

I confess I have got a little despondent at times over those who have not played up, but the generosity of others has done a lot to lift up my heart, for they have helped to remove what looked like being a loss.

Anyway, that half dozen, doesn't this make you feel you must go out and buy a postal order for half-a-guinea?

Yours sincerely,
HERBERT LECKENBY.

THE 'ANNUAL' BALLOT

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WANTED: Nelson Lees old series Nos. 12, 14, 15/16, 26/45, 38/40, 52, 54, 64/73, 76/7, 80/1, 84/90, 92/5, 98, 102/3, 107, 113, 501/513, also S.O.L. No. 256. C. CHURCHILL, 123 PINHOE ROAD, EXETER.

My Collection

No. 4. - GEOFF HOCKLEY'S

One summer day in the year 1909 an eight-year old boy lay propped up with pillows in a sick-bed and gazed listlessly at the all-too-familiar vista of garden and street. What youngster does not bemoan his fate if he is unlucky enough to be confined within four walls in the good old summer time, and must listen to the shouts and laughter of his schoolmates passing by after school, bound for cricket ground or swimming hole? Time hung heavily on his hands, and even books, his only solace, were failing to keep boredom at bay. They lay piled rank on rank upon the bedside table, but they had all been read and re-read....even "The Coral Island" and "The Dog Crusoe" seemed stale, and Kingston, Henty, and Mayne Reid no longer fascinated. And then, in the twinkling of an eye, boredom was banished, and that fretful eight-year-old found a new and fascinating world of thrills, surprises and adventure opening up before him as, his fate forgotten, he pored over the pages of a fat, scarlet-clad volume which a doting mother deposited in his arms, remarking, as she did so, "This should keep you quiet for a long time, son!"

It did! For between those scarlet covers were tales which made Ballantyne and Henty seem insipid. Here were pirates whose very names made the blood tingle — Solomon Snake, Sharkteeth, Two-Fingered Jim and a score of others — gentry compared with whom the cut-throats of "Treasure Island" seemed models of gentleness and chivalry. Here were Captain Angle, Rolly Rosewarne, Admiral Slam, Captain Jack and a dozen other dashing heroes. Here was the Motherland straining to throw off the yoke of a foreign invader, chronicled with such realism that one almost seemed to be reading the morning paper. Here were Red Indian adventures in which one almost saw the flash of scalping-knives and heard the warwhoop ring through woodland glades, and which made "The Last of the Mohicans" seem dull and stodgy. Here, too, were African thrills rivalling "King Solomon's Mines", delightfully shudder-some monsters in the heart of the dreaded Sargasso Sea, absorbing detective tales, splendid school yarns — surely never before had such a feast of good things been gathered between covers for a boy's delectation!

Now, I was that boy, and the volume which changed my enforced sojourn from boresome monotony to sheer delight was the 1909 "Chums" Annual. Such was my first introduction to that once-famous boys' paper, and on that long-past day I conceived an affection for it which has never dimmed. As I glance up at the ranks of scarlet-clad volumes in my bookcase, the fruit of years of searching, I can never quite resist a smile of quiet satisfaction at the thought that I possess one of the few complete sets of the old paper in existence. I think, too, of the elation when another hard-to-get volume was added from time to time, and the disappointments, only too frequent, when I was just too late upon the scene to pounce upon another --- "Sorry, you'd have been welcome to it, but I threw it out only a week ago!" Yes, many were the tips and rumours which I ran to earth, which ended either in jubilation or disappointment. Then, again, I recall the help so cheerfully given by members of our world-wide fraternity...the Rev. Jack Hughes of Brisbane, Alex Matheson in far-off Scotland, and others whose assistance resulted not a few times in adding another treasured volume to swell the slowly-increasing line upon my shelves. Truly, there are some mighty fine fellows in the ranks of old boys' book fans!

It was some ten years ago that I first conceived the somewhat ambitious project of getting together a complete set of "Chums" volumes. For many years after my memorable introduction to it with that 1909 volume, I took the paper in monthly parts, but with the passing of the years they disappeared or disintegrated...even that once-treasured "nineteen-niner" was only a memory, and I lost touch with "Chums" completely. Then, one winter evening in 1944, arriving in the city for a long-looked-for week's leave, I filled in a half-hour, while waiting for the bus which would speed me home into the bosom of my family, by browsing through a second-hand bookstore. Something familiar caught my eye...could it really be? ...yes, it was! A "Chums" annual, and of 1909 vintage, too! its scarlet covers faded with the passing of thirty-five years, but otherwise as good as when it first left the presses of Cassell! I turned the well-remembered pages,...yes, here there were the Walkey serials, the Paul Hardy illustrations, the Frank Shaw war stories, the hundred-and-one other delights of long ago, and I bore it off in anticipation of sampling them once again, telling the bookseller not to bother to wrap it...with the result that I was carried some distance past my bus stop!

Then and there, the project was born, and a week later, after departing once again, and after threatening my three youngsters (who, incidentally, were as thrilled with my discovery as I was) with dire penalties if I found so much as a turned-down page in the precious volume on my return, I set the wheels in motion. Advertisements were sent to the daily papers, letters written to second-hand book dealers far and wide, and "touts" established, in the shape of friends and relatives, in towns near and far. I sat back (only figuratively speaking!) and waited for results. But alas! how slow they were in coming! I had optimistically calculated that there must be hundreds of "Chums" volumes even in my home town, without taking other centres into consideration, all waiting to be purchased for the proverbial song, but I was soon disillusioned! The net result of the opening salvo in my campaign wasn't very encouraging...three volumes! Nothing daunted, I kept on, as the politicians say, "exploring every avenue", until one day---! "Go and see old Mrs. So-and-so," a friend told me. "I remember going to her house years ago, when I was a kid, and I'm sure there were stacks of boys' annuals in a big bookcase. I can't recall if they were Chums or B.O.Ps., but they might still be there after all these years."

Well, no prospector ever sped to the scene of a rumoured gold strike with more breathless anticipation as I did that very evening! A gentle little white-haired lady answered the door, and I explained my mission and satisfied her of my eminent respectability. Yes---she possessed a number of Chums volumes, which had belonged to her late husband. No---she had no objection to my seeing them, but she was not certain that she wished to part with them. I was ushered into a snug parlour, with a cat curled up by the fire, which cast flickering gleams on walls and furniture, and on---my heart leapt!--an enormous old-fashioned bookcase, in which stood in majestic array more Chums volumes than I had ever seen in my life! I gazed almost reverently at the line of beautifully-preserved volumes---sixteen in all---commencing with the fabulous Volume One---and made up my mind that I must have them at all costs!

I think that my poorly-controlled excitement won that dear old lady's heart. Was it for myself that I wanted them, and would they be carefully looked after?---her husband had set such a store on them in his young days. Ah, well, certainly the money would come in handy, and as long as they went to somebody who would appreciate

them...I assured her that no jewel of a sultan's harem would be more carefully guarded than those sixteen wonderful volumes, and, after pressing sundry pieces of crackling paper into her hand, I loaded them carefully into my car and sped gleefully homeward.

Such an unheard-of bonanza fired my enthusiasm afresh, and I redoubled my efforts, but as the months went by, the results were so meagre that I began to doubt the possibility of ever being able to run to earth nearly thirty more volumes to make the set complete. There were bright spots in the gloom, however, which encouraged me to continue the hunt...for instance, the episode which might be entitled "The Adventure of the Locked Trunk". This battered, dust-covered receptacle had stood for years in a corner of my neighbour's garage, until a casual remark which my friend let drop, to the effect that he thought that its contents were nothing more exciting than a few old books which had been the property of a long-deceased uncle, led me to suggest an immediate investigation. "Oh, of course, I forgot that you're one of these old book cranks," he replied. "I've never seen a key for it, but we'll soon fix that!" A deftly-inserted tyre lever did the trick, and the lid creaked back, releasing the mustiness of years, and revealing, among a miscellaneous litter of books, two large volumes swathed in brown paper. I lifted them out, hoping against hope, unwrapped them, and gazed delightedly on...yes, you guessed it!...two Chums annuals in perfect condition, and, moreover, ones which were on my "wanted" list! I needed no second invitation to "take them home if they're any use to you!"

So the months and years rolled by, with a volume added here and another added there, the gaps slowly filling and the line gradually lengthening, until only one was needed to make the set complete, and which, incidentally, proved to be the most elusive of all. But eventually that too took its place among the rest, and I was able to gaze with pride and satisfaction at the result of nearly nine years of unceasing search...forty-seven beautiful volumes from 1892, when Chums made its debut, through the palmy days of the nineteenth-hundreds, to 1941, when the old paper made its last bow.

Looking at these old volumes, I wonder what tales some of them could tell, could they but speak...tales of the times they have seen, and of the pleasure which they gave to youthful owners in by-gone years. I think, too, of the years represented by the date stamped upon the back of each... years of peace and plenty, of war

and unrest, and of gradually changing times. Somehow, I am glad that "Chums" did not survive to the present day, for I could never reconcile the jetplanes and space-rockets of our atomic age with the villains and heroes who once graced the pages of what was, in its heyday, I shall always think of as one of the finest papers ever published for the delectation of boys the world over.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

Those of you who buy the S.B. Libraries each month will, no doubt, be surprised to find a recent contribution by an old Blake writer - Stanton Hope.

On looking up my records I find the last story we had from his pen was as far back as Oct. 1937 (S.B.L. 2nd series No. 594 "The Stolen Submarine"), the one before that being in Nov. 1936 (No.552 "The Dockyard Mystery"). I have not read either of those stories, so I cannot say how the latest one fares by comparison. Perhaps someone who has them would like to give me their opinion?

The last I heard of Stanton Hope was that he was residing in Australia and had met some of 'our clan' who, you may be sure, gave him a fine reception.

"Way back", Stanton Hope was in the Editorial Chair at the Anal. Press, for he was the editor of "Chuckles" until 1915 when he left to 'do his bit' in the first World War. I have often wondered whether he was the author "Marjorie Stanton" who wrote many girls' stories. Maybe someone can give me the answer?

I hope you will enjoy reading how "Bill" Lofts met the new Blake author George Rees. This writer's first story was excellent - more like the tales of yore, with Blake and Tinker being their old pleasant selves again.

In response to my request, Herbert Leckenby has sent me his "Favourite Blake Story" which you will find in this issue. Incidentally, Herbert has chosen the same favourite story as my own, and I am pleased to say I am the happy possessor of a nice copy of "The Yellow Tiger".

I know it is difficult to pick out one from so very many Blake yarns, but most of us find that one or two stand out in our memory

more than others, and I am sure some of you - particularly my "Blake Circle" colleagues - could write just a little article on some story you favour more than others.

I have had a request for an article on dear old Pedro. Would someone come to the rescue - please! I do think the present day editor has made a great mistake in leaving out Pedro. I know it isn't considered the modern method of tracking down criminals, but where fiction is concerned 'to Hades with modern stuff'!

JOSIE PACKMAN.

* * * * *

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY - MARCH AND APRIL ISSUES

Reviewed by Josie Packman.

No. 307 "The Secret of the Castle Ruins". A. Parsons.

Another poor Parsons yarn, with no mention of Blake until page 32! It almost seems as if Blake and Tinker are not really needed in some of these tales. Stories such as this one would be better published under a new title, such as "The Mystery Story Library".

No. 308 "The Voyage of Fear" R. Hardinge.

Much more interesting than some of this author's latest works; but I still prefer his African yarns.

No. 309 "The Mystery of the Engraved Skull". S. Hope.

A somewhat involved story but very good. The locale of this tale is in Austria, the details of which are authentic. We could do with more of this author's work instead of some of the 'tripe' served up to us today!

No. 310 "The Case of the Swindled Guarantor". W. Tyrer.

Like a good many other of Tyrer's yarns - hardly worth reading. The plot is much too involved, and there are far too many characters.

To sum up: I recommend No. 309, but the others are not worth wasting your time on.

* * * * *

I MET SEXTON BLAKE AUTHOR GEORGE REES

By W.O.G. Lofts

(Member of the Sexton Blake Circle)

Whilst reading the recent S.B. Lib. entitled "The Secret of the Jungle", by George Rees, I was struck by the similarity of the style of writing to that of the late Gwyn Evans. At first I

thought it might be an old story of Evans reprinted and modernised, but on checking my records I found this was not so.

I decided to write to Mr. Rees himself and find out whether this author had written any more books which would be of interest to myself - and no doubt to many others. After some days spent in contacting those in the publishing world who I am fortunate enough to know, I received a letter from Mr. Rees in which, after thanking me for the compliments I had bestowed upon his work, he expressed astonishment that I had mentioned Gwyn Evans. He then went on to say that Evans and himself had been friends for over twenty years, and often in the past when Gwyn was feeling 'under the weather', George Rees used to write a chapter of a Sexton Blake story for him. One such story was "The Mistletoe Milk Mystery", U.J. No. 1365.

After several further letters, George Rees suggested that I might like to visit him one evening, and this I was very pleased to do.

Mr. Rees, who lives in West London, was soon chatting with me like old friends. He told me that "The Secret of the Jungle" was his first full-length novel, for he is not mainly a fiction writer, although he used to write a few short stories between the wars for various magazines. His main output is for the Government - articles for foreign newspapers, supplied through the British information services, explaining the British way of life and putting the British viewpoint regarding Politics, Education, Social Welfare etc. He is also an expert naturalist, and has just finished four nature books for children which will be published in the Spring. Any readers who have pets at home such as Goldfish, Birds etc. are advised to read these books, for they will find them most interesting.

At the moment Mr. Rees has no story pending for the S.B. Lib., but he hopes to start one soon. He had written two Blake stories before the one that was published, but both were found unsuitable. The original title of "The Secret of the Jungle" was "The Man with a Monocle". I myself think that the former is the better title.

During the war, Mr. Rees worked for the Government in the B.B.C. Monitor Service, for he is an expert linguist. He often used to analyse reports given out by Lord Haw Haw (William Joyce), and the strange thing is that he used to go to school with him!

One day, in 1935, whilst with Gwyn Evans at Fleetway House, they were introduced to Frank Richards, who gave both of them

some copies of the Magnet and Gem! Mr. Rees was amazed to learn that Frank Richards was still alive, and even more so, when I told him that he was still writing about Billy Bunter and Tom Merry. During his younger days Mr. Rees was a keen Magnet fan, and as a boy once had the first fifty Magnets. To prove his boyhood interest, he gave me correctly and in detail, the whole story of how Harry Wharton first came to Greyfriars! And he has not re-read the story since 1908! A most remarkable memory!

Before leaving, Mr. Rees presented me with the original manuscript of "The Secret of the Jungle" written in longhand, plus another story entitled "The Cuptie Mystery" which has never been published. These I shall treasure as much as the 'red' Magnets I have in my collection.

As I have already stated, Mr. Rees is a very busy man, and whether another Blake story does appear remains to be seen. At least he has promised to write one and submit it. Let us hope that this brilliant writer will, in time, provide us with many hours of pleasurable reading of Blake and Tinker as they were in the past.

----ooOoo----

Note: As a matter of interest, I can reveal that a recent survey by the A. Press showed that readers of the Sexton Blake Library range from the age of eight to eighty! The average age is nineteen.

MY FAVOURITE SEXTON BLAKE STORY

By HERBERT LECKENBY

In view of the fact that in all probability over 3,000 Sexton Blake stories have been written it is no easy task to pick out one and say it was best of all. Needless to say I have not read them all, but I have read hundreds, way back to the very beginning. Some I have found very crude (especially on re-reading in later years), some only passable, many very good and quite a number excellent. High in my list of yarns which enthralled me were the original Confederation stories, and a number of those dealing with Leon Kestrel. But the story which I should unhesitatingly say surpassed all others was "The Yellow Tiger", No. 1 of the Sexton Blake Library, 1st series.

I can distinctly remember reading it at the time it was published, whilst on night telephone duty during the First World War, and on reading it again when on a visit to Maurice Bond seven years ago. On the second occasion it held me no whit less than on the first.

George Hamilton Teed wrote over 100 stories of Sexton Blake, splendid stories most of them, but not one to equal "The Yellow Tiger". What a superlative send-off to the Sexton Blake Library it really was. It was a classic in paper covers; the tragedy is, that for this reason very few copies still exist. It deserved to live in the dignity of stiff covers and be available in public libraries today as surely as the stories of Sherlock Holmes.

Outstanding in this superb story was the character drawing. In none other was the bond between Blake and Tinker portrayed more vividly. There were times when it brought a lump to the throat.

Prominent, too, were some of the other characters ever memorable in Blake lore - glamorous Yvonne, unscrupulous Huxton Rymer and the bland, cold-blooded Wu Ling. One was held spell-bound as, in Hamilton Teed's immaculate prose, one followed the battle of wits o'er land and sea.

Yes, to me, undoubtedly the finest Sexton Blake story - "The Yellow Tiger".

AVAILABLE: Magnets, Gems, all period. Bound Volumes: Magnet 1929-1937. Gem 1917-1918, 1938-39. Halfpenny Comic Nos. 1-26 (1898). Monster Comic, Golden Penny Comic early 1920s. Puck long runs, suitable for binding. From number 19. Annuals: Holiday 1926, 1927, 1929-1934, 1936, 1937, 1939. Modern Boy 1931, 1940. Boys Cinema 1936. School Friend 1929. Aldines: Briton's Own, Boys Own, Turpins, Land and Sea, Detective, Tip Top, First Rates. Pluck, 1903-1910, 1922. Vanguard 1908. Sport and Adventure 1922. Champion Library's. Boys Realm Football Library's. Schoolgirls Own Library's 1939-1940. Newnes' Turpins. Frank Richards Autobiography. Boys will be Boys. Populars, S.O.Ls., Nelson Lees, Marvels, Boys Friends. Satisfaction guaranteed. S.A.E. requirements, please. Exchange suggestions welcomed. Offers of books always appreciated (your price, usually!).

T. LAMBERT, 347 GERTRUDE ROAD, NORWICH.

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

5/- each paid for the following Magnets in reasonably good condition:- 575, 739, 996, 1003, 1004, 1008, 1024, 1034, 1044, 1047, 1081, 1114, 1142, 1154, 1215, 1223.

ROGER JENKINS, "THE FIBS", EASTERN ROAD, HAVANT, HANTS.

HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

The "Sunday Dispatch" April 18th, in an article by Don Cockell splashed across five columns the heading "They All Called Me The Billy Bunter of Boxing!" In the text Don remarked "The experts who a year ago were ridiculing me as the "Billy Bunter of Battersea are now trying to jump on the Cockell wagon."

* * * * *

BIG HIT: Since our last number I have received dozens of striking tributes to Raymond Jones' article "First Day of Term" which appeared therein. Six letters I opened in succession one morning praised it highly. How about another one Raymond?

Whilst on the subject of articles I should like to ask Hamilton fans to get their thinking caps on with a view to the next Annual. As they are in the majority I should be in trouble if I did not give them their fair quota, but it's really up to them. How about articles on schools like Highcliffe, Cliff House, Grimslade, Rylcombe Grammar, Courtfield Council, etc? Plenty of material there, Highcliffe in particular.

* * * * *

We haven't been favoured with an article for the monthly by Roger Jenkins for some time. Here's one, in his usual thoughtful vein, so without more ado I'll hand over.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

* * * * *

By ROGER M. JENKINS.

* * * * *

One of the secrets of a successful painting is (so the experts inform us) repetition with a difference. The main line of emphasis of a drawing should be repeated with subtle variations in different parts of the picture. Whatever may be the truth of this contention in the realm of painting, it is of undoubted value in considering the characters at Charles Hamilton's three main schools. Nearly every one of them had a counterpart at the other two schools, but in no case was the resemblance more than partial. Repetition with a difference is the key to all the comparisons.

Strangely enough, one of the most interesting characters at each of the three schools was the bad hat who was also good at

games - Cardew, Vernon-Smith, and Mornington. Cardew, elegant, debonair, and full of airy persiflage was obviously based on De Courcy, the Caterpillar, at Highcliffe, a fine character whom Charles Hamilton probably regretted having wasted on one of his lesser schools. Vernon-Smith and Mornington were much alike during their early days, though Mornington was undoubtedly the more savage in his ways - he was on the verge of braining Higgs with a poker in one of the early stories. They were alike in their unscrupulousness, Vernon-Smith engineering the expulsion of Linley and the Famous Five in 1911, just as Mornington later made a number of attempts to get Jimmy Silver expelled. As time went on, however, Mornington cultivated a more urbane manner similar to that of Cardew, but Smithy was always the Bounder who could be relied upon to slam the door in a temper. Though Jimmy Silver came to be on friendly terms with Mornington, just as Harry Wharton was with Vernon-Smith, Tom Merry could never bring himself to be amiable to Cardew, who was nonetheless the only really likeable one of the bad hats. The Famous Five laughed at the Bounder's fits of bad temper, but Cardew seldom if ever dropped his equable bantering tones, and Tom Merry felt that Cardew was too deep for him. This mutual antipathy between Tom Merry and Cardew is probably the reason why Cardew was the most successful of the three (though he never quite achieved De Courcy's success as a character-drawing). It is interesting to note that all three at times became junior captain for a while, and all three lost the position, Mornington and Cardew because their erratic ways and volatile manners made them lose interest in the job, and Vernon-Smith because his cunning over-reached himself when he succeeded in injuring Redwing in mistake for Harry Wharton. Their undoubted ability at games, coupled with a lingering suspicion that none of the three was wholly to be trusted, provided the mainspring of the plot for many a fine character story.

The schoolboy impersonator was always a popular character with the readers. At St. Jim's Kerr was disguising himself as Dr. Monk as early as 1907, and Tom Merry was his loyal lieutenant in these matters. At Greyfriars of course it was William Wibley who achieved the greatest fame of all impersonators. His character was the most carefully drawn - he lived, breathed, and had his being in theatricals, and impersonating living people was only one of his side-lines. Some critics consider that Wibley's ability was a little too phenomenal to be credible, and certainly the

Grunter of Greyhurst episode in 1939 takes some swallowing - how could anyone contrive to make himself look like the Bunter C.H. Chapman used to draw? On the other hand, the impersonation of the small bearded eccentric Monsieur Charpentier never seemed beyond the bounds of possibility, granted that Wibley was the theatrical genius he claimed to be. And the episode in 1937, when he masqueraded as Archibald Popper, a new boy, was similarly within the bounds of credibility. It may be noted, too, that Charles Hamilton never let the situation run away from him altogether; it was acknowledged, for instance, that Wibley was too short to impersonate the other masters, and when he dressed up as Mr. Quelch in 1940 to surprise Mr. Lamb, he was obliged to remain seated, but, once again, how anyone could manage to make himself appear as angular and gaunt as the Remove master is a mystery which perhaps only Alec Guinness could answer for us. At Rookwood there were two competitors for the role of Wibley - Cyril Peele and Putty Grace. Peele's tricks were usually malicious - he would dress up as an old sketch and pretend to be the relative to one of the juniors. Putty Grace, on the other hand, directed his efforts to more worthy ends, and would dress up as an old sketch and pretend to be the abandoned wife of Mr. Manders. The Rookwood stories were the most plausible of all in that impersonations of real people were seldom attempted.

Freakish characters were rare in the Hamilton schools; consequently they stood out the more prominently for that reason. Herbert Skimpole, the Socialist and crackpot inventor of the St. Jim's Shell was an interesting but not very sympathetic character; we laughed at him, but never with him, although, as Dr. Holmes once assured his wife, "the boy's heart is in the right place". Alonzo Todd, on the other hand, was drawn with a great deal more sympathy, though he had a much shorter career. Most of what his Uncle Benjamin said was sound commonsense, but Alonzo, a strange mixture of simpleton and interfering busybody, was not the person to profit by such wisdom. The most attractive freakish character was Clarence Cuffy from Ganders Green, who did not make his appearance at Rookwood until after Alonzo had ceased to be a regular member of the Remove. Cuffy suffered greatly at the hands of Mr. Manders, Knowles, Legget and Towle, as well as from the kind attentions of his cousin Tommy Dodd, but somehow he never seemed to be so unfortunate as Alonzo, though he was undoubtedly the most gullible of all three. Possibly only Clarence Cuffy could have been persuaded to put quinine into his cousin's soup to improve the taste.

One of the more popular characters with Magnet readers was Coker, who was considered good enough by Edwy Searles Brooks to serve as a model for Handforth. Coker, essentially well-meaning, though overbearing, had a sublime faith in his own abilities. Aunt Judy kept him liberally supplied with the good things of life, and Potter and Greene tolerated him for this reason. His St. Jim's equivalent, Grundy, was nothing like so successful a piece of characterisation. He exercised a bullying sort of domination over Wilkins and Gunn which struck a different and more unpleasant note. Potter and Greene were seniors who would gently fade away when they got fed up with Coker, but Grundy's studymates were not able to be quite so detached in their dealing with him. Grundy's incursions into the stories is not so much amusing as annoying - he was really nothing but an unmitigated nuisance in most of the tales, whereas Coker's actions often had quite a significant bearing upon the plot. Gunner at Rockwood was more like Coker than Grundy, and his studymate Dickinson minor seemed at times almost to like Gunner for himself, strangely enough. Once again, the Rockwood copy of a Greyfriars character was more successful than the St. Jim's edition.

Charles Hamilton's most remarkable contribution to schoolboy literature is undoubtedly the fatuous fat boy. Billy Bunter, the prototype, was gradually developed from an ineffectual ass into a dishonest schemer and later, more happily, into the likeable Owl of the Remove we all know so well. Baggy Trimble of St. Jim's never changed at all - he was the dishonest schemer all the time, but never so bad as Bunter at his worst. We can't help laughing at many of Trimble's antics - do you remember when he reformed - under compulsion - and then told the awkward truth, to everyone's dismay? Or when he pretended he was leaving, and raised the wind by that old St. Jim's custom, the leaving sale? No, Baggy was not quite the blot on the St. Jim's landscape that some of his detractors would have us believe, but he was never so pleasant as Tubby Muffin of Rockwood. Tubby was always a genial sort of person, and even if he couldn't be trusted near anyone's tuck, he would never bear malice as Trimble and Bunter might. But, as Tubby was the pleasantest and most convincing of the three, he was also the least funny, and he certainly never approached the fame of his two fat counterparts.

Charles Hamilton has stated that he could not have made his schools seem the same even if he had tried, but of course he

attempted just the opposite, "the real truth being that an author should never imitate even himself". How successfully he lived up to this maxim of ringing the changes may be seen by anyone who cares to pursue the fascinating study of comparing similar characters at the three schools. Amongst the scores of his characters so well known to collectors, no two are completely alike. No author since Dickens has been endowed with such prodigious gifts of characterisation. It is a pity that so much of his work was published in transient form. *****

Here's Hamilton lore off the beaten track. As Don says the serial was a grand one.

KING CRICKET

Boys' Friend 3d Library, No. 237

By DONALD B. WEBSTER (Liverpool)

Some of you won't remember the Cricket Season of 1907 - or the final game in which The Champion County defeated The Rest of England on the stroke of time on the fourth and last day. What giants of the past comprised the England XI that year - such names as Foster, Fry, Hayward, Hirst, Jessop, Tyldesley, Braund and Blythe.

Who were the Champion County? Some aver the records give it as Notts, but don't you believe them because it was Leamshire (ask any reader of the Companion Papers for confirmation of this).

Didn't you ever hear of Arthur Lovell (shades of things to come) the first professional to captain a County Team, who scored a century in 45 minutes; or of his friend Kit Vallenge, a demon bowler if ever there was one! Ah, but what about his enemies: Geoffrey Lagden and Ponsonby (so aptly named) who looked down on the pros, yet whose 'expenses' were higher than any player's wages.

All these characters and events were chronicled by that prolific writer of school-and-sport - Charles Hamilton in his tale of the Summer game - King Cricket - which ran as a serial in the Boys Realm nearly 50 years ago and appeared in abridged form in the Boys Friend 3d Library. Having just finished this latter edition, one finds it all too short and sighs for the descriptions of the Surrey, Lancashire and Yorkshire encounter.

As to the story in which our hero through force of circumstances has to forsake his amateur status to turn professional to earn his

living, his friendship with Kit a fellow pro, and how they are beset by trials and tribulations, kidnapped on vital occasions (only to turn up and save the match in the nick of time), well it would take up far more space than is at my disposal.

Sufficient to say that even in those days Mr. Hamilton was referring to "runs coming as thick as leaves were falling in Vallambross" and "that county cricketers like Caesar's wife were above suspicion."

Of course, a rascally twin brother makes his appearance - (he has done so since in cricket yarns and will doubtless turn up again), but as our author points out the villain will be walked off one day like Eugene Aram who walked between two peelers with gyves upon his wrists.

Yes, fair play finally triumphs over adversity; the family fortunes are recovered. Arthur Lovell wins the hand and heart of Molly Hilton the daughter of the County Club Manager, and our story ends as it should.

In conclusion, one could criticise certain passages, but I have no wish to do so, for "away and away, beyond the reach of point and cover-point, whizzes the round red ball" and "as the evening shadows lengthen we take our leave of the Gentlemen who are Players and the Players who are Gentlemen."

* * * * *

Note: In view of the recent controversy as to whether Edwy Searles Brookes could describe a sports yarn better than Charles Hamilton, I am submitting a resume of one of the latter's early Cricket tales. Yes, I have read all about Jerry Dodd playing in a Test match and I am conversant with the finer points of the game - being an ardent player still, but there does seem to be some degree of authenticity in Mr. Hamilton's writings on the grand old summer game.

D.B.W.

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MAGNET TITLES (cont'd) No. 1267. Coker's Cricket Craze; No. 1268. The Secret of the Priory; No. 1269. Truants of the Remove; No. 1270. Coker's Camera Clicks; No. 1271. The Mystery of No. 1 Study; No. 1272. Hidden Plunder; No. 1273. Coker the Champion Chump. No. 1274. Billy Bunter's Banknote; No. 1275. The Mystery of the Green Satchel; No. 1276. Who Walloped Wiggins?; No. 1277. Billy Bunter's Bad Luck; No. 1278. Southward Bound; No. 1279. Harry Wharton & Co. in Egypt; No. 1280. The Lure of the Golden Scarab.

POST BAG

Eric Fayne Inspired Frank Richards

April 17th, 1954.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for your letter and the CD. I am extremely interested in your remarks on page 100 anent the alleged quotation in Gilbert Harding's book. If Ron has it right, as I suppose he must have, the "quote" is not genuine, as I suspected all along. To take dialogue from two different characters of different nationalities, and mix it, is not quotation. Any author's work could be made to appear absurd by such trickery. Even Shakespeare's. A mixture of remarks by Henry the Fourth and Shylock would produce:

How many thousands of my poorest subjects

Were in six parts, and every part a ducat!

Would that be quotation or misrepresentation, if printed as a sample of Shakespeare's work? But I shall have to get a copy of the story before I can take the matter further.

Now to turn to a more agreeable subject, perhaps it may interest you to hear that I have lately written a 'Western' novel called "The Lone Texan", which will be published shortly in a paper-backed edition at 2/- by the Atlantic Book Company. It is about a cheery young cow-puncher called "Fresh", who cavorts around on the Bar-Seven Ranch: a new character whom I rather like. It was Eric Fayne's article on the Rio Kid that set my mind wandering in the West again: and this is the result.

With kindest regards,

Always yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

P.S. April 19th. I looked in at a TV. play last evening called "It Never Rains!" There was a character in it named Bob, whose continual greeting was "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" This seemed sort of familiar somehow!

NEW COLLECTOR requires nearly all Nelson Lee Libraries, Sexton Blakes, Union Jacks, Boys Magazines, Vol. 4 onwards, Thrillers, Monsters, Champions, Hamiltoniana, Penny Dreadfuls, etc., bound and unbound. Also plates, photos etc. relating to all aspects of the hobby. Also bound boys' novels (G.A. Henty, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Talbot Mundy and similar). Summer's Gothic Bibliography "G.A. Henty" by G.M. Fenn. Rollington's "Old Boys Books" and similar. Condition must be good.

F. VERNON LAY, 167 WATFORD ROAD, HARROW, MIDDLESEX.

NELSON LEECOLUMN*
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By JACK WOOD

NOSTAW, 328 Stockton Lane,
York.

Before leaving the field clear to an old friend, Jim Sutcliffe, may I remind you of our great summer competition with a total of £3 in prizes. Closing date is MAY 31ST, so, please, DON'T DELAY! Let's make this a great success.

Secondly, next month I shall begin a conducted tour of the London homes of the lads of St. Frank's, and in the months ahead I shall be taking our tour into the St. Frank's country.

But let a familiar name "lay the trail," so to speak, and paint in the background.....

BY ORDER OF THE TONGBy JIM SUTCLIFFE.

The FU-CHANG TONG being the medium through which Edwy Searles Brooks brought about the change over in the Nelson Lee from a detective weekly to school stories, it struck me that a brief review of the original, and subsequent stories dealing with Nelson Lee's and Nipper's experiences at the hands of the Tong men would be of interest, being one of the milestones in the Old Paper.

I wonder how many readers who bought No. 111 of what we now know as the Old Series, back in July 1917, realised that this was to be virtually the last detective story to appear for over twelve years. The story - "The Yellow Shadow" was compiled from "Leaves from Nelson Lee's Diary" and the introduction finds Nipper, on the evening of a perfect July day, writing up some cases in story form for his famous note book series. The evening ceased to be perfect for Nipper when Nelson Lee yanked him out of his chair and thereby

injured his dignity! Some high words followed and Nelson Lee took over the writing job. The story proper now began with Nelson Lee in Snake City, Colorado, searching for a criminal - one Huntley Ferroll, whom Lee has tracked half way across the world. To quote the detective's own words, the chase was - "London - Buenos Ayres - Rio - New York - Orleans - Dallas - Oklahoma - Dodge City - Pueblo - Snake City." (Some chase for a criminal whom we are told is wanted for nothing more serious than forgery, blackmail, fraud, etc., but then Nelson Lee always got his man!) However, Ferroll is only in the story to get Lee involved in the Chinese Tong, and while on the look-out for Ferroll, the detective, hearing a skirmish taking place in Calamity Street, finds Ferroll attacking a Chinaman, Ah-Foo, whose life Lee saves.

Later on, Nelson Lee is "roped in" on the street by some of Ferroll's accomplices who drop him down a shaft of the deserted Addisbee mine workings, and in trying to escape from one of the many tunnels, the detective stumbles on the local meeting place of the notorious Fu-Chang Tong, who immediately decides to drop him down a still deeper shaft from which there is no return! This time Lee is saved at the last minute by Ah-Foo, who repays his debt to him, but in trying to escape they are recaptured by the Tong, of which Ah-Foo is a member. By making them think he possesses strange powers, Nelson Lee is given the choice of becoming a blood-brother of the Tong or death, and naturally takes the first choice. After the "formalities" of initiation are over, he finds that he is expected to stay around Snake City and do any dirty work there is to be done. Needless to say he does not stop, and leaves Snake City at the first opportunity, but the Tong are soon aware of this and being a world wide organisation Nelson Lee expects trouble on his homeward journey. In Illinois State an attempt is made to kill him with a dagger and again in New York by a poisoned needle.

The journey home by ship was uneventful, but on arrival at Liverpool Nelson Lee is met by Nipper and while they are still on the quay the detective is attacked by a bunch of Chinamen, but is rescued by some sailors. Back in London he again meets trouble while out with Nipper, and this time is dropped over the Embankment into a boat and taken to an opium den in Wapping. Just as he is about to be tortured by red hot irons, Nipper arrives with a rescue party which includes Detective Inspector Morley. This interference by Nipper gains for him the enmity of the Tong as well and after this Nelson Lee decides that the only thing they can do is to vanish for

six months, after which period a clause in the Tong laws calls off any further acts of vengeance.

Well, as every reader of the Nelson Lee Library knows, Nelson Lee and Nipper became established at St. Franks in the roles of Mr. Peter Alvington, Housemaster, and Richard, Basil, Herbert Bennett, pupil, with their true identities known to only two people - Dr. Stafford, the Headmaster, and Sir Rupert Manderley, the Chairman of the Governors.

There would at this period appear to be some scope for some stories for the Tong tracing the famous pair to the school, but the nearest approach to this was the story entitled "The Messages of Mystery", No. 120 Old Series. In this story mysterious, menacing messages began to appear, all bearing the initials "F.C." One was even flown from a kite - a national Chinese pastime!

As we read the story through it became obvious that the Fu-Changs had tracked down Nelson Lee and Nipper and preparations were made for them to leave the school in secret. It was only at the end of the story, when "Mr. Alvington" was discovered by "Dick Bennett", Tregellis-West and Watson, suspended above the bottomless pool from the bridge over the river Stowe, that the identity of the sender of the messages is revealed. He is not a Tong man but an insane ex-porter of the school, whose initials happened to be "F.C." and who had a grudge against the previous housemaster and did not know that there had been a change. A very good story indeed!

In No. 166 O.S. "By General Request", it appeared that the danger from the Tong had now passed, for Nelson Lee's and Nipper's identities were revealed to the whole school and the Tong was forgotten for nearly twelve years.

In 1929, however, the Fu-Changs did return - with a vengeance! This time it was a four story series by Brooks at his best. Right from the opening chapter of No. 183, 1st New Series, when Eric Gates saw a hideous yellow faced figure lurking in the lane outside the school, on a cold, dark, blustery November evening, until the last chapter of No. 186, we were given thrills galore.

The first attempt by the Tong on Nelson Lee's life was made by substituting him for a guy on top of Wellborne and Co's gigantic Guy Fawkes bonfire, and only a dramatic last minute rescue bid by Nipper & Co. saved him. The next attempt appeared to have been even more successful! Nelson Lee was found murdered on a foggy night by the Caistowe police - shot through the heart, but once

more the Tong's underlings had blundered. The detective had already been attacked by a bank robber on the school golf course and left unconscious after being stripped of his clothing - hence the Tong's mistake.

In the next story, after a shooting episode on Bellton station, Nelson Lee decides to take the offensive and he and Nipper, disguised as Captain Boom and his Indian servant, tracked the Tong down to their lair in the Edgemore Priory ruins, where unfortunately they fell into the hands of the Chinamen and Nipper was forced to hang on to a rope to which was attached a massive boulder, while beneath it lay Nelson Lee, bound hand and foot. The moment Nipper has to get go from exhaustion Lee will be killed and at the same time Yen Sing, who was in charge of the local Tong operations, intended to plunge a dagger into Nipper's heart. Needless to say, a rescue party arrived at the last minute led by Barry Stokes. The battle between Nelson Lee and Nipper and the Fu-Changs was not over however, and the last story began with the famous pair both receiving bombs in the form of parcels. Lee was too alert to be caught by this form of attack, but Nipper's parcel was bagged by Brewster and Co. of the River House School who were under the impression that it contained a cake. In the skirmish that followed when some St. Franks juniors, led by Handforth, attempted to retrieve it, the parcel exploded.

After this the Board of Governors decided that Nelson Lee and Nipper must leave the school before the Tong's next attack, which might have more serious results to the school and its occupants. Elaborate precautions were taken and they left the school in the company of Detective Inspector Lennard - in an armoured car of the latest design, the object being to ensure that the Tong could see they were leaving.

Needless to say, the Chinamen were already active and Nelson Lee and Nipper were captured very soon after the start of the journey and smuggled on board an old tramp steamer, the Santa Maria, from Lisbon.

Their capture was witnessed by Captain Phineas Boom, the retired sea captain, from the "crows nest" of his new home "Bellton Chase", and he immediately began to organise a rescue party. The net was closing all round now and news had already been received by Scotland Yard that the Tong had been stamped out in China. Yen Sing was aware of this and this last bid was an attempt to line his own pockets by demanding £20,000 from Nelson Lee by torturing

Nipper on board the ship. By this time the rescue party was approaching in two tugs with Captain Boom directing operations, and in the round-up that followed Yen Sing met with the fate he deserved when he fell into the engine room machinery.

With the danger from the Tong finally removed, everything became "as you were" at the school, at least, so we thought at the time, little knowing that only eight weeks hence the school was destined to be razed to the ground by another of Nelson Lee's arch-enemies!

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

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

Hume House once again on this beautiful April Sunday. A good attendance was welcomed by the hosts, Len & Josie Packman, the former giving a hearty welcome to the doyen of the club Arthur Lawson. Arthur was attending his first meeting for some time and he promised to give some more of his popular talks on the Victorian papers and books.

The Northern Leeds club quiz competition was solved to our satisfaction, let us hope that umpire Herbert Leckenby will also be satisfied with the answers that we have sent him. A very enjoyable quiz and the hearty thanks of the Londoners go to our Northern Brethren of the Happy Hours. Roger Jenkins gave an account of his visit to the Leeds club and introduced his "Study Game". All those present gathered round the tables and all participated. After your Uncle Benjamin led in the first three rounds it was only proper that the originator should prove a very good winner. Many thanks Roger for a happy game. ~~Roger still in the limelight as~~ Hamiltonian librarian proposed that the overseas members participate in the library and that the reading time for home members be increased to six weeks. This was agreed to without a division. Full details will appear in the monthly news letter. A copy of "Billy Bunter the Bold" is available to all members gratis, so if you desire to read same let me know.

Next meeting at Cherry Place, Wood Green on Sunday May 16th.
Commence at 4 p.m. sharp.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, April 10th, 1954: Fourteen members were present when Chairman Breeze Bentley opened the fourth Annual General Meeting. After the minutes had been read and passed, it was announced that an exhibition had been envisaged to be held in the rooms but the necessary permission with regard to advertising the address was not forthcoming. Treasurer Gerald Allison informed the meeting that cash in hand was now £22.3.3¹/₂ and the books in the library totalled some 1500. Present officers were re-elected en bloc, the only alteration being the election of Eric Humphries as co-auditor replacing Horace Twinham. Herbert Leckenby announced that owing to taking up his former situation which involved night-working, he was now unable to stay until the close of the meetings, the secretary in future therefore writing the reports. Gerald Allison then introduced a new game "Highcliffe v. Bagshot" which proved extremely enjoyable. This was followed by refreshments, in the course of which a cross-word puzzle was handed round for solution. This was solved in record time by Ronald Hodgson. In the course of the meeting, a new member, Ivan Reeves, was introduced. The next meeting will be held on Saturday, May 8th.

N.J. SMITH, Hon. Sec.

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M I D L A N D S E C T I O N M E E T I N G: April 12th

For this our third birthday meeting, we had with us both the Editor and the Chief Illustrator of our beloved "Magnet". Thus a very happy and memorable evening was assured; especially as we have twice previously been disappointed by Mr. Chapman being unable to be with us.

Our esteemed Wolverhampton member, Mr. Jack Ingram, made a very happy little speech of introduction and welcome, making a few remarks on the hobby generally, and referring particularly to Frank Richards' superb creation - Greyfriars.

He mentioned various of the characters whom we know so well; Inky whose idiom must have given his creator much mental exercise; Bull who seemed carved out of the rugged moors of his native Yorkshire. Then there were the masters. All these and others come crowding back to mind, not least through the work of the illustrator. Frank Richards is a name very well known to the man in the street, but not that of C.H. Chapman through whose drawings Billy Bunter is such a familiar figure. Then we must remember the

Editor, Mr. Down, who organised and produced. As our speaker wittily remarked, "Not for nothing was Queloh known as a DOWNY bird". In conclusion, Mr. Ingram referred to Frank Richards' superb literary craftsmanship.

Then for the next half hour or so Mr. Chapman was sketching on the blackboard. It was most fascinating to see how in an amazingly short space of time with a few deft strokes of the chalk, a wonderful likeness appeared even in this photographic negative type of picture without the powerful aid of the lights and tones of normal pen or pencil on paper.

We then partook of refreshments and toasted our visitors.

Mr. Down then spoke and after thanking us for our welcome, he referred appreciatively to Mr. Ingram's speech and went on to express some very interesting views on "Greyfriars v. St. Jims". He felt that the St. Jims boys were well drawn, typical public school boys not much exaggerated in the main, whereas many Greyfriars characters were rather exaggerated. But Greyfriars soon became enormously popular and the "Magnet" had the greater circulation. Mr. Down paid tribute to Charles Hamilton's great skill in character drawing.

After this the formal business was concluded by our Chairman presenting our visitors with a silver ashtray suitably inscribed, given by himself on behalf of the club.

Our visitors having replied suitably, the meeting was thrown open for questions and a general get together.

EDWARD DAVEY.

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MERSEYSIDE SECTION:

April 11th, 1954.

The attendance was somewhat smaller at this meeting, due, to some extent, to the counter attraction of the nice weather, and because of the indisposition of a couple of members. A number of apologies for non-attendance were read, and then the financial report, etc., was dealt with by the secretary. The chairman followed with details on various section and club items; he regretted that owing to the unavoidable absence of two of our leading Lee-ites, the discussion on Nelson Lee would have to be postponed until the May meeting. In its stead we had a debate on the substitute stories in the "Gem", etc., using as our basis the admirable article on the subject by John H. Shaw in the 1949 Annual, which certainly gave us ample scope for observation and comment.

Generally speaking, of course, the majority had very little time

for the substitute writers, and all were agreed that it is easy to detect the differences of style, phraseology, idiom, etc., after only a cursory glance at an imitation story. On the other hand, it was also agreed that these writers had many points in their favour, their plots in many instances being quite original, and the stories would have been quite acceptable if they had not been offered to the reader as genuine Hamilton. This policy has had the effect of prejudicing, somewhat unfairly at times, the reader against the substitute writers, not all of whom were bad. The most deplorable feature, as far as the not too knowledgeable collector is concerned, is the annoyance and irritation caused by the purchase of books which are believed to be the genuine article, and on examination are found to be otherwise. The services and advice of the sections are always available to would-be purchasers who may be in doubt, and it is to be hoped that members will take advantage of this facility if they are to save heart-burning and financial loss. The meeting ended with the library business at 10 p.m. and we look forward to our next on May 9th.

F. CASE.

FOR SALE: Magnets 1936-40; Gems 1932-40; Boys Friends 1916-21; Populars 1927-31; Boys Magazines 1922-31; Union Jacks 1905-7, 1914-20, 1922-30; Boys Realms 1921-2; Modern Boys, Adventures, Champions, early 1930's, 6d each; Skippers pre-war 9d each; Thrillers, ditto, 9d each; Triumphs, 9d each; Bullseyes 1/3d each; Young Britains, 10d each; Tit-Bits, mint, 1909-16, 6d each; Mint pre-war Film Annuals, etc. etc. BEST OFFERS required for early mint Red Magnets, Chatterbox, 1870, 1901-5 and 1913; Wide-Worlds, first six vols., Modern Wonders, 1937-39, 6d each. American Science Mags Bound vols. on the Occult. Vols. on Crime; Young Folks; Champion Annual. All kinds of bound books 1800-1940; Billy Bunter's Barring-Out, 5/-. All kinds of books required especially Magnets, Gems, and S.C.L.'s. S.A.E. please. RONALD ROUSE, 3 ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE, GAS HILL, NORWICH.

I offer 5/- each for any of the following Detective Library numbers in good condition. 10/- for No. 1. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 24, 29, 31, 33, 35. LEONARD PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

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

This clever little poem appeared on the menu on the occasion of the luncheon at Bill Jardine's on September 20th, 1953.

RAMBLING IN SUSSEX

By W.W. JARDINE

Come, let us take a look into the pages,
Of those favourites, the "Gem" and "Nelson Lee",
Let's wander round the countryside in stages,
Through Wayland Woods, and Caister by the sea.

Let's stroll along the leafy lane from Bellton,
To the scene of thrilling escapades and pranks,
The landmarks that we've read about, and dwelt on,
Moat Hollow, and the Woods, and then - St. Franks.

Let's row along the River Rhyl, alighting
Near a willow, where the shining water dims.
Then, through a glade, to Rylcombe Lane, inviting
Us to walk along the pathway to - St. Jims.

We muse upon these names, and all the glories,
Of the countryside, the Downland and the hills,
Each place recalling many cherished stories,
Of adventure, pathos, comedy, and thrills.

And at our 'journey's end', with eager faces,
To the tuckshop, and a crowd of welcome looks.
And the toast is, "All the characters and places
Brought about by Martin Clifford - E.S. Brooks".

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WANTED: Sexton Blake Libs, present series, also Magnets before 1000, and Nelson Lees 2nd new. GORDON THOMPSON, 53 WALLASEY PARK, BELFAST.

Further to Bob Whiter's fine cover sketch, can anyone give us an article on the Captain Justice stories?

Held over until next month * * * * *
"You Can't Take Them With You!" a
thought provoking article by Jack Murtagh.