

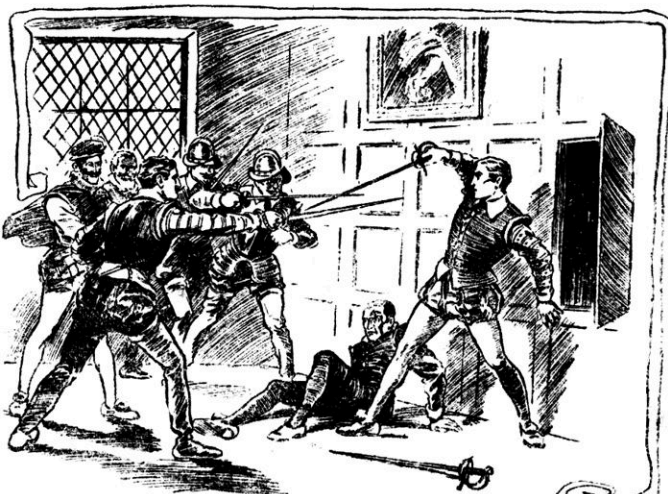
# THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 98.

FEBRUARY, 1955

PRICE 1s.6d.

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erting himself to the utmost, Humphrey Cleeve fought his way to the man's side, and fought with him.  
MARVEL. Vol. XVI.--No. 402. | **NEW COMPLETE NOVEL EVERY WEDNESDAY.**

AN EXAMPLE OF THE LATE R. J. MACDONALD'S EARLY WORK TAKEN  
FROM  $\frac{1}{2}$ d MARVEL, No. 402, July 20th, 1901.

# The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 9 No. 98.

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FEBRUARY, 1955

Editor, HERBERT LECKENBY  
c/o YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES,  
7, The Shambles, YORK.

## From the Editor's Chair

DEATH OF R.J. MACDONALD: A letter from Frank Richards conveys the sad news of the passing of R.J. Macdonald. It occurred at Lyminster, Hants., early in the New Year. He had been ill for some time.

R.J. Macdonald first appeared in what was then known as the Harmsworth papers about 1900. An example from the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Marvel appears on the cover. In that paper he illustrated many of the early Jack, Sam and Pete stories. From then on he was busily employed on what we will call the Amalgamated Press papers, juvenile and adult, right up to the time when they folded up following the outbreak of the Second World War. There was just the exception when he was serving in the Royal Naval Air Service during the 1914-1918 conflict.

To our readers, however, he will ever be remembered as the illustrator of the St. Jim's stories in the 'Gem'. Just as C.H. Chapman will always be identified with Bunter, so will R.J. Macdonald with D'Arcy of St. Jim's.

The first Gem story he illustrated was No. 91, November 1909, "Tom Merry & Co. Abroad".

When the Bunter Books were started, he was chosen to do the dust jacket and the inside pictures and continued to do so right up to the time of his death.

And so he joins Leonard Shields, A.H. Clarke, J. N. Pentelow, H.A. Hinton and Warwick Reynolds, five of the little band associated with the never-to-be-forgotten Magnet and Gem. May those that are left remain with us yet for many a day to come.

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THE ANNUAL: Gratifying reports, some from overseas, continue to

come in, and there's one striking feature judging by the voting papers. That is all the articles are doing well which is all to the good. In a production like the Annual it is necessary to cover all periods in the history of boys' weeklies and if those who write the articles see that their efforts are appreciated, it encourages them to carry on with the good work.

Well, that's the bright side - here's the other. At the moment of writing, ten per cent of the subs. are still outstanding! To put it mildly, in view of my changed circumstances, that's something rather disheartening more than a month after the Annuals were sent out. I was confident I should have no anxiety this time, but there it is.

It would be a thousand pities if an inconsiderate minority put the future of the Annual in jeopardy. I'm not as pessimistic as that, but it could happen you know.

INDEX: Some time ago Bill Gander suggested there should be indexes to the C.D. volumes. It was a good idea: many a time it's taken me a long time to find something I wanted in back numbers. Anyway we are going to attempt it. It's going to be a formidable job catching up but straight away Roger Jenkins volunteered to take it on. That's just like Roger, no job in connection with the hobby is too tough for him, and with this number you will find the result of his labours on the first volume. We will deal with the others as quickly as possible, but it won't be every month.

\* \* \* \* \*

98, 99, 100! Only a few more weeks now. Some very interesting articles and personal recollections are coming along. And Bob Whiter the ever ready, has done a fine sketch for the March number, a reminder of what is coming the month following.

Now a little request: I should be grateful if those who are sending a subscription for a period, would kindly add an extra shilling for the big number. It will save them sending one specially, and I, of course, want to cover extra cost of that issue. I do want to make it a real smasher.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

'ANNUAL' CORRECTIONS

Page 53. Boys of London and New York - Start date should read  
-/6/1877.

Page 55. Add - Our Boys 28/3/1911 to 28/3/1911 1 issue only.  
Our Boys and Girls Weekly should read:  
3/3/1935 to 29/12/1935 44 issues Victory Press.

COLLECTORS' WHO'S WHO - Add

COOK, JACK R. 178 MARIA STREET, BENWELL, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.  
Groups 7(a), (b), 5(a) (b), 6(a) (c).

### THE STORY OF A COLLECTION

by HERBERT LECKENBY.

In June last an article by Jack Murtagh of New Zealand, entitled "You Can't Take Them With You!" appeared in our pages. It was a very thoughtful article, and caused a lot of comment. As a result it was suggested that in the event of a member dying the C.D. and the O.B.B.C. should if possible help to dispose of the collection on behalf of those left behind. This was agreed upon but, of course, with the hope that it would be a long time before such a task had to be undertaken.

Alas! only a few months later Harry Stables, beloved member of the Northern Section O.B.B.C., was called upon to take his last journey.

I believe I only saw Harry once in the interval and on that occasion there was a great fear at my heart, for he looked so ill. I think, too, he had an idea he was reaching the end of the road for he said he was in full agreement with that article and when anything did happen to him he would like his comrades of the Northern Club to dispose of his collection on behalf of Mrs. Stables and in the interests of collectors of our circle generally. He also said that he had bought a lot of his papers in the days when prices were less than they are now. He therefore would like them to be sold at prices within the reach of all. Therefore when the time came some items did go at prices rather below that considered the ruling ones today. I say that in fairness to the dealers to whom collectors turn in the ordinary way.

Well, as things turned out, there could not have been a more typical example of what Jack Murtagh had in mind. Shortly after Harry had been laid to rest, Gerald Allison, Norman Smith and I

went to see Mrs. Stables. She had been left entirely along. She welcomed us warmly and as we talked to her we felt, oh, so glad that we had volunteered to help. She confessed that she had not the slightest idea what the books were worth and was content to leave them entirely in our hands. Often since she has thanked us with tears in her eyes.

On that first visit we were shown into two rooms stacked from floor to ceiling with bound books and periodicals. It didn't take us long to realise that we had a tremendous job on, for most of the bound books, apart from Chums, B.O.P., the Captain and the like were of little interest to members of our circle. It was a question of separating the wheat from the chaff, and when it was done we found there was a gratifying amount of wheat. It all meant many journeys to Bradford, and here I must pay tribute to my colleague, Gerry Allison. On him fell the brunt of the work, the packing and dispatching of scores of parcels, and the sorting out of piles of letters. In time we were able to fill gaps in many collections, though inevitably there had to be a few disappointments, as in some cases several would ask for the same items.

There is still a lot more to do. It is a sad task for ever in our thoughts are memories of that grand little fellow with the gentle voice and the kindly smile. But already we have the satisfaction of knowing that we have been able to hand over to the one he left behind a substantial nest egg, possible more than ten times the size it would have been if she had been left without our help.

Surely, a striking example, if ever there was one, of the value of the lovers of old boys' books getting together in brotherhood.

And, often old friend, we shall be thinking of you as we turn the pages of the books you loved so well.

Postscript: Anthony Baker of Barnet bought stacks of B.O.P.'s Chums etc. from the collection, and on reporting arrival to Gerry Allison this is what he said:

"They've arrived!! What a magnificent collection! This is undoubtedly my Greatest Day in O.B.B. collecting. Practically every volume is in fine condition and the amount of reading material is incredible. It must have taken you a very great deal of time and trouble to get them all sorted, packed and sent off. I really am very grateful to you."

Well, that illustrates why we who have had something to do with distributing of the collection have found pleasure in the doing thereof.

# BLAKIANA

Conducted by Josephine Packman

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

My mail during the past month included two interesting letters from overseas. One is from Australia, and in it the writer, Mr. Victor Colby, has this to say:

"The recollection of some of us goes back further into the Blake tradition than others. To one, the period par excellence is around 1916, to another the early 1930's. Certainly there have been variations on treatment of style and story through the years, but it is still part of the Blake Saga, and represents a nice case of diversification within standardisation, and provides essential variety. However, in most stories Blake is still the pivot, mainstay and central theme, and while this is so, I find myself prone to overlook the poorness of plot, carelessness of construction and unwonted modernisation of later tales".

I rather feel that the writer is voicing the opinion of most of us, for much as the quality of the modern S.B. Library has deteriorated in the eyes of 'the Old Brigade', we still buy them and do try to overlook the weaknesses which we see in them. Mr. Colby also suggests that the lists of U. Jack and S.B. Library titles and authors might be resumed. I have had a number of similar requests during the past few months, and have therefore decided to carry on from where Maurice Bond left off. This will of course be subject to space permitting - in other words, I do not promise they will appear regularly every month. The last U.J. titles published in this magazine appeared in the issue for January 1951 and were for the year 1923. This month I will continue in retrospect with the year 1922.

The other letter is from Ray Hopkins, an old friend and late attending member of the London O.B.B. Club. Ray encloses a cutting from the 'New York Times Book Review' entitled "The Only Infallible Thing". This is a review of the book "Fingerprints Never Lie" (The Autobiography of Fred Cherrill, Ex Chief Superintendent of the Fingerprint Bureau, New Scotland Yard). Here is an extract:

"When Fred Cherrill was a boy in Dorchester his favourite reading matter was the weekly exploits of SEPTON BLAKE....."

which were the closest equivalent, in Edwardian England, to America's dime novels. And 'it was', he writes, 'this detective of fiction who first turned my thoughts toward becoming a detective in real life'.

"We can be particularly grateful to SEXTON BLAKE for starting the career, not only of an unusually able professional police technician, but of probably the most attractive literary personality yet to emerge from a volume of Scotland Yard memoirs - the much-publicized Fabian not excluded".

We Blake enthusiasts have every reason to feel proud of our sleuth when he receives compliments like this!

I am given to understand that 'all goes well' regarding the 'special' article for the 100th C. Digest which, as you will have read in our 'Editor's Chair' last month will most likely be a 'double number'.

Don't say I haven't made up for the briefness of my last month's remarks.

JOSIE PACKMAN.

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UNION JACK TITLES

YEAR 1922.

952. Among the Unemployed	A. Edgar.
953. Missing at Lloyds. (Losely & Lobangu)	C. Hayter.
954. The Case of the Five 'L's'. (Zenith)	A. Skene.
955. The Dereland Castle Mystery. (Kew & Lawless)	A. Murray.
956. Threatened by Three. (Yvonne, Kestrel & Zenith)	A. Skene.
957. The Black Disc. (Granite Grant)	P. Quiroule.
958. The Convict Millionaire. (Kestrel)	L. Jackson.
959. The Case of the Polish Refugee. (Yvonne)	G. H. Teed.
960. The Ghosts of Losely Hall. (Losely & Lobangu)	C. Hayter.
961. The White Sentinel. (Kestrel)	L. Jackson.
962. Rupert Waldo, Stuntist. (Waldo)	E. S. Brooks.
963. The Affair of the Patagonian Devil. (Yvonne)	G. H. Teed.
964. A Chinese Puzzle. (Yvonne)	G. H. Teed.
965. The Black Vendetta. (Yvonne)	G. H. Teed.
966. The Affair of the Sacred Fire. (Zenith)	A. Skene.
967. The Case of the Gold Maker's Secret.	S. Gordon.
968. Sexton Blake, Lumberjack.	S. Gordon.
969. In League Against Him. (Kestrel, Zenith & Yvonne)	A. Skene.
970. The Sealed Bride.	S. Gordon.
971. Count Flambert's Crime. (Yvonne)	G. H. Teed.
972. The Confederation's Recruit. (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray.

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|---|--------------|
| 973. The Diamond Clue. (Crim. Con.)   | R.Murray.    |
| 974. A Legacy of Death.   | C.Hayter.    |
| 975. The Case of the Mystery Plantation. (Kew)  | G.Chester.   |
| 976. The Case of the Red Parasol. (G. Grant)  | P.Quiroule.  |
| 977. The Wireless Telephone Clue (Three Musketeers)   | G.H.Teed.    |
| 978. The Case of the Branded Man.   | S.Gordon.    |
| 979. The Case of the Bond Street Dentist. (Kew)   | G.Chester.   |
| 980. The Winfield Handicap Case. (Rymer)  | G.H.Teed.    |
| 981. Sexton Blake's Blunder. (Rymer & Yvonne)   | G.H.Teed.    |
| 982. The Case of the Rickshaw Coole. (Rymer)  | G.H.Teed.    |
| 983. Double-crossed. (Kestrel)  | L.Jackson.   |
| 984. The Voodoo Curse. (Rymer & Marie Galante)  | G.H.Teed.    |
| 985. The Hunchback of St. Madros. (Crim.Con.)   | R.Murray.    |
| 986. The White Rajah.   | G.H.Teed.    |
| 987. The Case of the Great St. Leger Fraud. (Kew and<br>Carlac)   | G.Chester.   |
| 988. Sexton Blake in South America. (Losely)  | C.Hayter.    |
| 989. A. Rogue on 'Change. (Plummer)   | M.Osborne.   |
| 990. The Broken Circle. (Yvonne)  | G.H.Teed.    |
| 991. The Bandit of Bruyeres. (Three Musketeers)   | G.H.Teed.    |
| 992. Sexton Blake, Gun Runner. (Losely)   | C.Hayter.    |
| 993. The Clue of the White Feather. (Losely)  | C.Hayter.    |
| 994. The Soap Salvors. (Yvonne & Rymer)   | G.H.Teed.    |
| 995. Eyes in the Dark. (The Owl, Kew and Lawless)   | A.Murray.    |
| 996. The Case of the Attwell Aircraft Co. (Zenith)  | A.Skene.     |
| 997. The Mystery of the Big Woods.  | G.H.Teed.    |
| 998. The Case of the Doped Favourite (Plummer)  | M.Osborne.   |
| 999. The Burlington Collar Mystery.   | L.H.Brooks.  |
| 1000. The Thousandth Chance. (Kew, Rymer, Zenith,<br>Plummer, Kestrel, WuLing, Mary Trent, Three Musketeers<br>and Black Duchess) | G.H.Teed.    |
| 1001. The Diamond Special. (Three Musketeers)   | G.H.Teed.    |
| 1002. The Case of the Prodigal Father.  | W.M.Graydon. |
| 1003. The Case of the Blind Beggar.   | S.Drew.      |

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THE FIRST COLOURED COVERS

The first coloured covered Union Jacks contained probably some of the finest stories written for that paper.

Let us take a look at the first few. Lewis Jackson was the first on the scene (No.886) in a Leon Kestrel story, the illustra-



tions being drawn by H.M. Lewis. Robert Murray followed with a Criminals Confederation yarn, the illustrations this time supplied by 'Val'. Next came one of E.S. Brooks' Rupert Waldo stories, illustrated by Harry Lane. This was followed by a fine effort from the pen of Anthony Skene, featuring Monsieur Zenith, with illustrations by E.E. Briscoe. Lewis Jackson then turned up again in the following two issues, both of which were Kestrel episodes, teaming up with H.M. Lewis in the first and Arthur Jones in the second. Another Brooks' Waldo yarn was the next on the programme, this time illustrated by E.E. Briscoe. This was followed by another Robert Murray Confederation story illustrated by 'Val.' The Skene/Briscoe team then produced another Zenith yarn, after which came yet one more R. Murray/H. Lane Confederation effort. The next was a non-featured story. Written by Cecil Hayter and illustrated by Sid Pride, it is a very good yarn - as one would expect from the pen of such a fine writer. Jackson-Kestrel-Lewis, Skene-Zenith-Briscoe followed, and then came an Andrew Murray yarn featuring Professor Kew, illustrated by C.H. Blake.

Thus, in the first fourteen coloured issues we had four by Lewis Jackson (Kestrel), three by A. Skene (Zenith), three by Robert Murray (Confederation), two by E.S. Brooks (Waldo), one by Andrew Murray (Kew), and one 'odd' one. The illustrations were provided by seven different artists.

Here then, was a selection to suit all tastes and catering for each individual featured-character supporter; and if that wasn't enough, the succeeding months produced even more favourites such as Granite Grant, Losely and Lobangu, Nihil, Ferrers Lord, The Raven, The Black Duchess and Yvonne.

Truly it can be said that the first year of the coloured covers was one of the best periods in the life of the 'Union Jack'.

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(Note. The titles of the above mentioned stories will appear in the U. Jack list for the year 1920, to be published in a subsequent issue of Blakiana. J.P.)

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SEXTON BLAKE CIRCLE: The meeting which should have taken place at the end of January has had to be postponed.

All members will be advised in due course as to the revised date, etc.

COMIC CHARACTERS

An annex to the article in Collectors' Digest Annual, 1954.

by Leonard Packman

Several more unlisted Comic Papers came into my possession too late for inclusion in the 'Annual' article. In addition to this I have since obtained some Christmas Double Numbers of Comics already listed but covering years other than those for which details were given. I might mention that the majority of these Christmas numbers are in absolutely MINT condition and were supplied by Mr. Charles Vennimore from whom I have had a number of very early 'red' Magnets, 'Green' (Blue?) Gems, Plucks, etc., all in the same impeccable condition! A forthcoming issue of this magazine will contain an article on this man's astounding collection, the greater part of which is in brown paper parcels that have not been opened for years!

In order, therefore, that the list should be as complete as possible, our editor has kindly provided the space in this month's Digest. Here then, are the details.

BIG COMIC: (Henderson & Sons) A very fine paper containing excellent quality material. Characters: (Year 1915\*) Ginkland; Gay Gus and Shrimp; Topsy and Tommy (the Terrible Twins); Salmon and Cucumber; Mike (the Muddle-Puddle Porter); Professor Potash; Persevering Percival. Stories: The Blue Tunic; Buffalo Bill and the Slayer from Sonora; On Service of the State; The Master of the Mitts (Norman Keys, Boxing Detective). \* Xmas Number.

GOLDEN: (Amalgamated Press) The paper of this name listed in the Annual should have read GOLDEN PENNY, and was published by the Fleetway Press (as was the MONSTER).

One of A.P.'s later publications and not one of their best. The fact that it did not seem to 'catch on' is possibly by reason of it being practically an all-serial paper. Characters: (Year 1933) Lieut. Daring and Jolly Roger; Bruno, Lionel and Percy Piggins; Golden Picture Palace. Stories: Peril Trail; The Seven Stars; The Boy Clown. Picture Stories: The Golden Eagle; The Secret of Smugglers Castle; Little Brother.

LARKS: (Amalgamated Press) A good 'modern' comic, printed on pink paper similar to CHIPS. Ran for over thirteen years. Characters: (Year 1939\*) Dad Walker and his Son Wally; Peggy (the Pride of the Force); Luke and Len (and Odd Job Men); Piccaninny Pets; The \* Xmas number.

Happy Family. Stories: Lumberjack Dan; The Boys of Boffin's Estate; Tales of the Wild West; Jennie (the Little Flower Girl). Picture Story: Son of an Outlaw.

PICTURE FUN: (Trapps, Holmes & Co.) To my mind one of the very best of this firm's publications. Well printed on good quality pink paper, containing excellent characters and stories. I would give a good price for a 'run' of this paper! Characters: (Year 1911) The Happy Alleyites; Sammy Barleycorn (the Farmer's Boy); Dandy Dick (and his Dapper Old Dad); Natty Niblet (the Boy Wonder); Billy Bashful; Ginger Coleman (and his dog Hot Stuff); Jack the Sailor and his pal Bill Huggins. Stories: The Branded Hand (by Frank Drake); The Chums of Friarswell (by Harry Gregory).

As we now know, 'Frank Drake' was one of Charles Hamilton's pen-names. 'Harry Gregory', however, I was not sure about, although the story is of similar style to 'our one and only'. I therefore wrote to Mr. Hamilton and asked him if the story or 'author' rang a bell. In his reply Mr. Hamilton has the following to say:....."I don't think I was still writing for them as late as 1911, but my earlier stories were often reprinted and it may be one of these you found ..... I am sure that I never wrote anything about "Friarswell", and 'Harry Gregory' is quite unknown to me. On the other hand, names and titles were sometimes altered in reprints, so it may be a case of "Guilty, my lord!"

SPARKLER: Published by Provincial Comics Ltd. (as also was MERRY MIDGET). A well-produced paper but lacking in good quality material. Characters: (Year 1931) Wurzel Farm; Tom Trotter and Harry Hoofit; Alfie and Auntie Annabel; Tall Ted and Tiny Tom; Cliver Offside and Tommy Touchline; The Muckabout Family; Spot and Spink; Minnie Ha-Ha (the Charming Cherokee). Stories: The Body that Vanished (Malcolm Deen, detective and his assistant Waxey); Birds of Prey (No connection with Maxwell Scott's story of this title!)

Additional characters and stories in papers already listed in the Annual but covering different years:

COMIC CUTS (Year 1915) Characters: Tom, the Ticket of Leave Man; Ruff and Reddy. Stories: The Amazing Island; The Heart of No Man's Land.

COMIC LIFE: (Year 1913\*) Burglar Bertie; Uncle Gooseberry; Gip (and his Giraffe). Stories: Don Zalva the Brave; The Fateful Football; The Monarch of the Air; Tufty & Co's Christmas.

\* Xmas D. Number.

FAVOURITE: (Year 1911) Characters: P.C. Diddle 'um; Pretty Polly Perkins; Happy Horace; Tiny and Tinkle (the Terrible Twins); Willie Winkle (Messenger Boy); Bertie Brightboy and Wee Machappy. Stories: The Mysterious Adventures of Barbara Brown (and Bob the Bulldog); The Girl Outcast.

FIREFLY: (Year 1915) Characters: Syd Chaplin; Gilbert the Filbert; Timothy Touchwood; Inspector Joe - Kerr (the Pride of the Force); Mr. Sharp (the Smart Shop Keeper). Stories: The Drama of Life; Cast Adrift.

LOT-O-FUN: (Year 1915\*) Characters: Weggie and Wonald; Pneumatic Peter (the India-rubber Man). Stories: The Young Charioteer; The Temple of Tootama; The Exploits of Marcus Brayne; The Golden Ladder; The Adventures of Pontiflex Shrewd (Scientific Detective).  
\* Xmas D. Number.

MERRY & BRIGHT: (Year 1915\*) Characters: Reggie (the Rollicking Rajah); Nicky Nick-Nock (the Perky Postman). Stories: Philip Carrol, V.C. - Convict.

\* Xmas D. Number. All the other stories in this fine issue were complete 'shorts'.

PUCK: (Year 1913\*) Characters: Jolly Joe Binks (and his Pocket Pierrots); Dan (the Menagerie Man); Monty's Moving Pictures. Stories: A Trip Through the Sky; Round the World for Pictures; Twinkle (the Little Star).

AVAILABLE: Magnets, Gems, Schoolboys Own Libs., Nelson Lees, Greyfriars Heralds, Union Jacks, Sexton Blake Libs., Marvels, Populars, Monthly Picturegoers 1921-30, Boys Cinemas, Screen Pictorials, Picture Show Annuals, Many Bound Film Annuals, Adventures, Rovers, Holiday Annuals 1923, 1924, and 1929, Robin Hoods 1902, Buffalo Bill Libs. 1914-30, Chatterbox, Annuals, Wide Worlds Boys, Black & White, Capstan, Great Western Railway Magazine Complete Run 1919 - 1930 Giantland, Vanity Fair 1st Mint Vol. with Plates, Cycling World 1st Vol. 1896. Books on Aviation, Speedway, Photography, Stage, Motors, Ships, etc. Young Britains, Dick Turpins 1902, Claude Duvals 1902. 50 Vols. of Punch, Happy Mags. etc. S.A.E. PLEASE.

WANTED: Police Budgets 1893 onwards. RONALD ROUSE, 3 ST. LEONARDS TERRACE, GAS HILL, NORWICH.

WANTED: ANY COPIES OF CHIPS BETWEEN YEARS 1914 and 1920 (inclusive) GOOD CONDITION ONLY. 2/6 EACH OFFERED. L. PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

# HAMILTONIAN

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

GREYFRIARS HONOURED AGAIN: Britain's leading humorous weekly, "Punch", of course, had an article in its issue dated December 29th, 1954, which would delight all Hamiltonians. It was written by B.A. Young, ran to over two pages, and was headed thus:

## EIGHTY YEARS ON

(With a bow to Mr. Frank Richards and a nod to "Astounding Science Fiction")

It was a delightful dose of whimsy. For example: "It was some years since Bunter had ended his connection with the Remove. After the most distinguished and certainly the longest school career on record, he and the Five and all the rest of the Greyfriars men had had to leave when Greyfriars was disbanded as the result of the opening of a rotten comprehensive school in Friardale, to which Sir Henry Quelch had been appointed as Head. They were, in any case, due for National Service, and as seventy-five years' uninterrupted education had given them the most towering intellects of the age, the Government posted them en bloc to the interplanetary rocket service."

But despite the change of environment Bunter was the same old Bunter and we found him searching the interplanetary ship Greyfriars II in search of food, especially jam and the story finishes like this.

"Five muscular spacemen advanced on the cringing Bunter and for a while the usually strict discipline of the control compartment was lost in a free-for-all which only came to an end when some very unusual frequencies on the thought circuit brought Captain Prout hurrying along from the commander's cockpit."

I wish I could quote some of the dialogue, dialogue which proved that Mr. Young knew well his "Magnets".

There was also a sketch showing Bunter's beaming features on a flying saucer.

Well, when a publication of world-wide fame features at length the characters which first saw the light in a half-penny boys' weekly, it makes you think, doesn't it? There must be a reason, a reason I suggest complimentary to the man who created them.

And Bunter again got the headlines in the "Daily Herald" recently when there was a little spot of bother down at Portsmouth. It arose from the comments of Mr. J.T. Goodman-Jones, Secretary of the Portsmouth Branch of the National Union of Retail Confectioners, that a tuckshop run by Mr. William Haines of the Portsmouth Lower Grammar School was unfair to nearby sweet shops. Said a 'Herald' reporter under a heading -  
"HEARD THE LATEST, BUNTER?"

"I say, you chaps, heard the latest? Some rotter wants to shut the tuck shop! Now, stop kicking my shins. It's true I tell you. Ask old Haines the porter if you like.

What rotten luck, just as that fat owl Bunter's postal order had turned up. I believe he's put them up to it because we threatened to make him stand us all treat.

That is how the boys of Greyfriars might have greeted the news that caused gloom among the 210 boys (aged 11 to 18) at Portsmouth Grammar School".

Fleet Street should be grateful to Frank Richards for so often providing it with some excellent copy. How about using its powerful influence to gain him that Honour just to show its appreciation?

\* \* \* \* \*

Relative to the death of Mr. R.J. Macdonald, here are some comments on his work from Maurice Kutner of the London O.B.B.C.

"Undoubtedly, Macdonald created the atmosphere of the Gem, as Clarke and Chapman did for the Magnet, and his work made St. Jim's a distinctly separate school. His juniors were very boyish, full of fun and life. What they lacked in the solemnity of Warwick Reynolds juniors, they made up in youth and movement. Their grins and other facial expressions were, at times, perhaps too much of a muchness. This repetition of face and figure made it difficult to pick out Talbot from Levison, or Merry from Digby. His seniors and prefects were not the veritable giants of Chapman's Greyfriars seniors; they were certainly less awe-inspiring. However, R.J. Macdonald has earned all our gratitude for his drawings of D'Arcy. Whether Gussy was in love, or being bumped, or going through the horror of having his "clobbah" ruined in any way, or merely adjusting his monocle with a frigid stare, he was always depicted, firstly as a gentleman, and secondly, as the lovable well-meaning ass that he was. Macdonald's love of Gussy pervades the whole of his work

for the Gem."

(As I expected Gerry Allison's article on Harry Wharton provoked some of our readers. Here are two replies and Basil Adam also has a word to say in the Letter Box column. H.L.)

CHRIST CHURCH VICARAGE, BARNET, HERTS.  
14. 1. 1955.

Dear Mr. Leckenby.

I found Gerry Allison's article interesting and provoking. But I am never quite happy about articles like that, because they seem to mingle fiction and reality. I mean, would Gerry have liked it if Frank Richards had made Squiff Captain of the Remove, or not given Harry Wharton his touch of pride? To take another illustration, none of us, presumably, would like Skinner in real life, and yet if he did not appear in the Greyfriars stories, or if he reformed, we should not really like it. That is what I mean about mixing fiction and real life. You can't really pass judgment on a fictional character, whose personality is moulded solely by the author. You can criticise Frank Richard's characterization of Wharton; you can discuss the faults and fine points in his character, but you cannot - at least I don't think so - treat him exactly as a living person. And I've got the impression that is what Gerry has done, though it may just be a lack of appreciation on my part.

Besides, I honestly think that Wharton was Frank Richard's best drawn Captain. All great leaders have their weaknesses, a certain V.I.P. of today was an alcoholic not so many years ago. That he has triumphed over it is a sign of a strong and not a weak character.

So it was with Wharton's pride. That he overcame it and became Captain of the Remove was a triumph of will. He had relapses, as we all know, but that was what made him human, as Gerry himself agrees, and, besides, if he hadn't had relapses, or if he had had them when not Captain of the Remove, Frank Richards could not have written his three finest Magnet series!

Nor were these relapses so common, as Gerry seems to imply: there were the three main series of 1927, 1932 and 1935, plus a few odd incidents, out of a total of 1,683 issues. Whole years went by with Wharton's pride hardly mentioned, and in those years his leadership of the Remove was as strong and decisive - probably more so - as that of Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver.

But Gerry does not want Wharton's character changed, he just wants someone else as Remove Captain. Even if I agreed with him that Wharton's pride made him unsuited for his position, I would not have Frank Richards make someone else Form Captain. The Magnet would have been much less interesting if he had, even if Harry Wharton had remained the central figure in the stories. You can't treat fiction as fact.

In naming an alternative person as Form Captain, such as Mauleverer or Squiff, we are again departing from the realms of fiction. Someone once wrote a book on "The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines", which was ridiculous, because Shakespeare's heroines, like all other characters in fiction, did not have any existence other than that which their author gave them. And so I just don't see how you can picture another Removite as Captain. Frank Richards did not develop Squiff's character enough for us to consider what he would have been like as Captain. Wharton's character was far more developed by Frank Richards than Squiff's, as is always necessary for a Hero's - and a Captain's! I am not saying Squiff was not clearly drawn, but surely the two were on different levels of development, and a comparison is deceptive.

"Even the cads respect Squiff" says Gerry. Actually, I can't remember any incident where Squiff comes into contact with Skinner & Co., but this is probably lack of knowledge on my part. However, even if Squiff and Skinner did "get on all right", look at the difference in the positions of Wharton and Squiff.

Wharton is leader; he has to lay down the law; he has to get the slackers to turn up to games. No wonder he comes to blows with the cads: it is, surely, the sign of a strong and leading character that he does so. You see, you just can't compare the two.

Now, when Wharton's pride got hold of him, he did, on extremely rare occasions, join the rival team. This, obviously, is not the conduct for a Captain. But, in the first place, such occasions were very rare, and, in the second, it would have been a duller Magnet if Frank Richards had not put in such incidents. Fact and fiction are colliding again.

What Gerry wants is another "typical Captain", more like Merry or Silver. I don't; I think Wharton's not only a grand character, but a grand Captain. However, I don't want to make this a matter of life and death, as in the case of Jim Cook v. Basil Adam!! It is an interesting, but hardly a vital point.

Yours very sincerely,  
ANTHONY BAKER.



24 English Street, Longtown,  
Cumberland. 15th January, 1955.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Harry Wharton....."the greatest character in school story literature." What a whale of a claim. Is Gerry Allison being serious, or is he just indulging in a bit of Bunterish exaggeration? In any case, I would like him and some other contributors to the C.D. to know that, in my opinion, a little less emphasis on Greyfriars and a little more attention to St. Jim's would be appreciated by many old boys.

I am sorry to know that Anthony Baker is unable to see the "smiling Tom Merry," the "handsome Talbot" and the "burly Jack Blake" in the GEM illustrations by R.J. Macdonald. When I first saw the Greyfriars boys in the MAGNET.....how long, long ago ..... I said to myself: "What queer boys. They look like foreigners." I might add that, to me, they still look like foreigners.

At a recent Toc H Meeting, one of my friends, when speaking of his old headmaster, described him thus: "He was a beast, but he was a just beast." I immediately remembered that this description of a master was sometimes used in the GEM and MAGNET, and on asking my friend where he was quoting from, he replied, after some hesitation, that it might be from Rudyard Kipling's "Stalky and Co." Where then did this rather well-known description of a master originate.. in the mind of Rudyard Kipling, or in the mind of Charles Hamilton.

Publish if you like.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

ROBERT FARISH.

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

By Roger M. Jenkins.

No. 8 - Magnet No. 106 - "The Greyfriars Plot"

In later numbers of the Magnet, when mention was made of Billy Bunter's rather grubby countenance, there would sometimes be a reference to the famous occasion when he was given a bath in the Remove dormitory. Such references to past events were always references to stories in previous Magnets - the incident mentioned would never be one which had not been related at all. In Magnet No. 106 Bunter's aversion to washing became the joke of the school, and accordingly a party of well-wishers headed by Bulstrode, Hazeldene, Skinner and Tom Brown gave Billy Bunter a long-needed bath. Skinner obligingly scrubbed Bunter's back with a scrubbing-brush

whilst others deluged him with torrents of hot and cold water, and generously rubbed soap into his mouth, nose and eyes. For the purposes of the illustration Bunter was depicted as sitting in the tub in his underclothes - a somewhat curious way of having a bath. It need hardly be added that Bunter was not grateful for this unselfish administrations.

In 1909 the circulation of the Magnet was at its lowest ever, and the paper nearly gave up the struggle for existence. Fortunately, it managed to keep going, and a campaign to increase circulation was inaugurated. Magnet No. 106, dated 19/2/10, bears on its cover the modest caption "1,000,000 new readers should buy this number." Certainly the circulation did increase, though hardly to the extent hoped for in the caption.

This was not the best period of the red Magnet. Stories tended to be rather rambling and disconnected, and this defect was even more noticeable in the longer tales like No. 106, which was the first of the regular penny numbers and had nineteen chapters. Apart from the incidents about Bunter's bath and the way in which Ionides became locked in Carne's study, the main theme was the presentation of "Julius Caesar" by the Remove Dramatic Society - which was "The Greyfriars Plot". Marjorie Hazeldene earned the part of Portia by dressing up as an old freak and pretending to be a long lost aunt of Nugent's - so proving her histrionic ability. The performance of the play was most successful, but, as this left nothing to be described by the author, a note of climax was missing from the end of the story.

Despite these defects, however, "The Greyfriars Plot" was an amusing miscellany, and no doubt assisted the recovery of the Magnet. Not only does it explain why the paper had done so badly in the past, but it also contains a hint of the glories that were in store for the future.

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POTTED PERSONALITIES, No. 8 (Second Series)

Mr. Paul Prout.

If Mr. Quelch is the finest schoolmaster character in the whole world of school stories - and that goes without saying - Mr. Prout runs him a very good second. In potting Mr. Prout's ponder-personality, we can do no better than let Frank Richards, in his own inimitable style, describe the master of the Fifth. "Time had been when Mr. Prout had weighed only twelve stone, and could have

been measured round the waist with an ordinary yard-measure. In those far-off days Prout had been an active man, and, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter. He told stories in Common-room, over and over again, unfortunately, of his exploits in those ancient days. Horns and antlers, bear-skins and buffalo-skins, adorned Prout's study; and to each one hung a tale, told and re-told by Prout with great satisfaction to himself.

But those days were long past. Since then Prout had found, with every passing year, more and more difficulty in buttoning his waistcoat. Perpendicularly, Prout was not impressive; but his diameter and circumference were imposing. His Form, not in his hearing of course, likened him to the 'huge earth-shaking beast' mentioned by Macaulay.

Prout would drop into the Games Study to chat with members of his Form. He believed in keeping up a spirit of free and friendly confidence between master and pupil. What the Fifth Form men felt like on those occasions Prout never knew, and never suspected. It was quite a blessing to Prout that he did not know that he was a most portentous bore. Blundell declared that he did not believe that Prout was physically capable of keeping his jaw still. He believed that Prout, so far as his chin was concerned, had solved the problem of perpetual motion.

In that gem of a pen-picture, painted in a few skilful strokes by the master, we have the potted personality of Prout. Coker has ever been Prout's burden - and the funniest stories ever written have been those showing Prout and Coker in conflict. Probably Prout has found Coker's Aunt Judy nearly as great a burden as he found the great Horace.

In Red-cover days we knew of Prout's alleged activities in the Rockies, but his character was not fully developed until the roaring twenties and the fearsome thirties. But right from the beginning, the Greyfriars scene has been enhanced by Prout's trusty rifle, his Trichinopoly cigar, and his elephantine tread.

Prout often appeared in supporting episodes to the main plots, and he always brought delight in his train. But he really came into his own in the fine series when he became Headmaster, with Loder as his assistant. But Prout has no gift of leadership, and few of the qualities of a Headmaster - and he failed ignominiously, while his activities gave birth to the Remove's "SECRET SEVEN". Prout failed as a Headmaster, but never as an entertainer, for he was really so completely believable. How we laugh at him, and how

we love him.

Paul Prout may be no great shakes as a master, but as a character picture he is "unparalleled", "unprecedented", and indeed, "unequaled". Hats off to Prout!

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MAGNET TITLES (Cont'd): 1371. The Bounder's Sacrifice; 1372. The Worst Master in the School; 1373. Rivals for a Fortune; 1374. The Bunking of Billy Bunter; 1375. Backing up Bunter. 1376. Bunter the Dodger; 1377. In Open Revolt; 1378. The Island Schoolboys; 1379. The No-Surrender Cricketers; 1380. The Secret of the Old Oak; 1381. Fishy's Fearful Fix; 1382. The Rebels at Bay; 1383. Bunter the Billionaire; 1384. A Snob in Clover; 1385. Billionairing with Bunter; 1386. The Shadowed Billionaire; 1387. Bagged by Bandits;

## Nelson Lee

### Column

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By JACK WOOD  
NOSTAW, 328 Stockton Lane,  
YORK.



Snow, which has fallen recently on a scale hardly equalled since the "purple period" of Edwy Searles Brooks, has clamped down on all forms of transport. Travellers have been benighted in many parts of the country, so I'm afraid we shall have to forego our tour until next month when roads should be passable again.

First, however, may I thank all my friends who so kindly remembered me at Christmas and sent me cards and other messages of seasonable goodwill. To them and all other members of our happy organisation I send my thanks and best wishes for 1955.

And now, here are two more of the interesting entries in our

last summer's competition. The first, by Cyril Banks, tells us -

WHY I PREFER ST. FRANK'S TO GREYFRIARS  
ROOKWOOD OR ST. JIM'S

Why do I prefer St. Frank's to the Hamilton schools? Actually I am very fond of them all, but ever since I read my first Nelson Lee Library, I have always had a soft spot for St. Frank's. As time passed, St. Frank's jumped into first place and has stayed there ever since. Perhaps I had better start at the beginning, though.

My memories of St. Frank's go back to the time when Nelson Lee and Nipper were known as Mr. Alvington and Dick Bennett, so I have known St. Frank's almost as long as it has been in existence.

As this time, of course, I was only about nine years old, but fortunately I was quite a good reader. Unfortunately, however, my pocket money did not run to buying books, so I had to rely on what I could borrow from older chaps.

I had already made friends with the Hamilton schools through a "Penny Popular" I found lying around. Actually it belonged to a neighbour's boy, older than myself, who often came in to see us. He had left it behind so I thought I would see what a "big boy's book" was like. I found I could read it all right and understand it well enough to want to finish with fairy stories and read "grown up books". This boy neighbour was a "Fairy Godmother" as far as I was concerned for he passed all his weeklies on to me. Once week there was a book I had not seen before. It was smaller in size and had a coloured cover. It was a school story, too, but somehow it was different. It was about detectives as well as school, and my word one of the boys was a real detective's assistant. This was great, and I took to St. Frank's right away.

As time passed (I was now buying my own copy) we (the lads in my district) often used to play at being Nipper and Co. We formed a little football team and played lads from other districts. We called ourselves by our St. Frank's names, too. Handforth was in goal whilst I, being Nipper, was, of course, centre forward - it was my ball anyway! They were great times.

Whilst I think the N.L.L. had some fine tales, more variety of plot, and not too many plots repeated, I think my main reason for preferring St. Frank's is because the Nelson Lee Library takes me back many years to the time when "I" was Nipper.

MY FAVOURITE ST. FRANK'S CHARACTER?

H'm, there is of course Nelson Lee himself, Nipper, Handy,

Browne, Fatty Little, Archie, Willy, and many others. I think, however, old Handy is going to get my vote. As straight as can be, always blundering in and out of trouble. He is always ready with his famous right, but always ready to do a good turn.

Here's to Edward Oswald Handforth then, for what would St. Frank's be without him. May he live for many years to come.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jim Sutcliffe also tells us .....

#### WHY I PREFER READING ST. FRANK'S STORIES

Like many other readers of the Nelson Lee Library, I graduated to it through the Magnet and Gem. Right from the first copy I bought early in 1928 it appealed to me more than the other school stories - the system of bedrooms shared by the same study-mates seemed more "chummy" and also gave more scope for after lights out excursions and "rags". The absence of many chapters dealing with form-room episodes for which Brooks has often been criticised was perhaps somewhat a relief to us who were all undoubtedly at school when we commenced reading and had enough of our own form-rooms!

What went a long way in making the Old Paper so popular in the latter twenties was the breezy, friendly atmosphere of the author's own page at the end of most stories. "Between Ourselves" really made one feel that Edwy Searles Brooks really existed. His smiling photo adorned the page each week and letters from critics and supporters were dealt with week after week with the same cheerful interest. Accurate details were given to all readers who asked such varied questions on local geography, a pupil's age or a master's birthday. Some readers asked for strings of titles of past stories - all so different from the formal two or three lines reply I have had at various times from the editors of the Magnet and Gem. Brooks realised that this was the closest link he had between himself and his reading public - remember the hints he used to drop in advance of an extra special series? At Summer holiday and Christmas series our author really excelled himself and I have vivid memories of my first holiday series when Lord Dorrimore took one of his delightful parties to India - flying non-stop in an attempt to catch a plane with a kidnapped St. Frank's junior on board! I could hardly wait for Wednesday mornings to come round for that series.

With such a personality as Nelson Lee a resident master at the school there was scope for unnumberable mysteries calling for his detective powers to solve them, all of which made the stories

far more interesting and gave them just that difference which I liked.

Let the critics - and their name is legion - say what they will, Edwy Searles Brocks in my opinion was one of the most sincere and enterprising writers of school stories and even if some of his plots were not always 100% original, don't forget there is nothing new under the sun!

And also.....

MY FAVOURITE ST. FRANK'S CHARACTER, AND WHY

I can say without any doubt that my favourite character is Edward Oswald Handforth! Handy, as he is affectionately known, is not everyone's favourite - quite a few readers even detested him. Blundering, tactless, obstinate, belligerent - there were some of his faults, but his good points more than outweighed them. His generosity and loyalty to his friends when they needed it made him a very likeable character, and while he could be relied upon to involve any party of which he was a member in the direct of predicaments he usually revealed a streak of genius in him by which he saved the day.

AVAILABLE: Magnets, Gems, Long Runs 1929-1940, others 1907-1922. Sexton Blakes 1916-1945. Populars 1912-1917, 1925-1930. Boys Friend Librarys 1907-1940. Boys Friend Weekly, long runs, 1905-1914. Boys Realm 1909-1928. Marvels 1894-1922. Union Jacks 1906-1932. Plucks 1898-1912. Rockets, Pals, Boys Magazines, Young Britains, Startlers, Modern Boys, Thrillers, Adventures.  
PRE 1900 ITEMS: "Comic Cuts", "Scraps", "Ally Slopers", Larks, Worlds Comic, Ad. Comic, Nuggets, Snapshots, Aldine Half-Holiday/Cheerful. Vanguard, Nugget Library's, Sports Library, Pucks 1906-1911. Aldine Robin Hoods (1920) complete. Holiday Annual most issues 1927-1941. Other Annuals: Champion, School Friend, Schoolgirls Own, Modern Boy, Boys Cinema, Playbox, Tiger Tims, Boys Own Annuals, C.D. Annuals. Bound Volumes: Pluck (1908), Boys Herald (1908), Gem (1-26), Also others 1933-1939. Boys Journal, Boys of England, Pals, Comrades, Boys Graphic, Boys of the Empire, Cheer-Boys-Cheer, Aldines. WANTED: Most types O.B.B's. also other magazines 1890-1940. (YOUR PRICE, USUALLY!) SATISFACTION GUARANTEED. Exchange suggestions welcomed. S.A.E. ENQUIRIES, PLEASE.

T. LAMBERT, 347 GERTRUDE ROAD, NORWICH.

## LETTER BOX

Another Link Breaks!

Rose Lawn, Kingsgate,  
Broadstairs, Kent.  
January 12th, 1955.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for the January C.D. I like Chapman's cover picture very much. No doubt you may have heard about poor Macdonald: he had been ill for some time, but he was several years younger than I, and the news was a shock to me: one does miss the old faces as they go, one after another. Chapman and I must be the only two left now of the old brigade: we seem to be like the little brook, going on for ever! I expect that Chapman will be doing the pictures for future books: I hope so at any rate.

I see that you reproduce Mr. Handley's letter in the C.D. What a happy idea, and how improbable! I have had a very pleasant letter since from Mr. Handley, who turns out to be an old reader.

On the subject of letters, may I plead "extenuating circumstances" to kind correspondents who do not receive prompt replies! The Christmas post seems to be bent on breaking records, and there is almost an Everest of friendly missiles piled on my desk: every one of which was a pleasure to read, and every one of which will be answered by my own fair hand: but there will inevitably be a spot of "delayed action".

I hear that somebody somewhere had mooted the idea of "Carcroft" on the new T.V. when it comes into being. Not a bad idea!

With kindest regards,  
Very sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

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Basil Replies Briefly

28 Derwent Street,  
Newcastle-on-Tyne, 5.  
6th January, 1955.

Dear Editor,

I was rather amused by James Cooks attack on my letter in the January, "Collectors Digest". Really he sticks his neck out a mile! I feel sure that any reader of my letter in the November "Collectors"



Digest" would fail to find any evidence of a personal attack on Mr. Cook, as he tries to suggest.

My arguments on the merits of Harry Wharton and Nipper must have struck home for him to have been stirred into such a wild and illogical letter.

I see that Bob Blythe and our poor editor come under the lash too!

Regarding the splendid article on Harry Wharton by Gerry Allison, I still feel that he deserved to be Captain of the Remove. Wharton has an air of grandeur about him that no other schoolboy in fiction posses.

He can be truly named 'Wharton the Magnificent'.

Very best wishes,

BASIL ADAM.

## OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

### LONDON O.B.B.C. REPORT OF THE SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SUNDAY

JANUARY 16th: Reassembling after the Christmas "Hols" sixteen members braved the very inclement weather to attend the A.G.M. at "Cherry Place". After the usual formalities the election of officers took place. Chairman Len stated that he thought that after serving faithfully for seven years a change of chairman would be beneficial to the club. After a ballot Roger Jenkins, who had consented to stand as a candidate, was elected. Outgoing chairman Len was unanimously elected as vice-chairman. All the other outgoing officers were re-elected en bloc. So now Roger holds both the chairmanship and Hamilton librarian. It was unanimously agreed to change the chairman each year to the advantage of the club. After the usual votes of thanks to all concerned, those present enjoyed a very good feed ere quiz competition time commenced. Hylton Flatman conducted his effort and winner was Josie Packman. Second quiz was conducted by Cliff Wallis and he took for his questions knowledge that had appeared in the very fine current issue of the "Collectors' Digest Annual". Winner was Len Packman, thus completing a family double. Bileen Whiter then conducted her team competition. Two teams of six competed against each other and Frank Vernon Lay's team beat Josie Packman's by one point. Len Packman gave an impromptu talk and with another interesting discussion the meeting

terminated.

February at 27, Archdale Road, on Sunday 20th, 4 p.m. sharp.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

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NORTHERN SECTION MEETING - JANUARY 8th, 1955: J. Breeze Bentley presided over a good attendance and wished everyone a happy New Year.

After business had been disposed of, we got down to entertainment of a kind rather out of the usual. It consisted of a cinema show arranged by secretary Norman Smith with Messrs. Veevers Ltd., Press Photographers, Leeds. For once we played truants from the various schools and watched a delightful programme of films splendidly produced which consisted of travels in the lovely Yorkshire Dales and abroad, cartoons, the Northern Command Tattoo last year at Leeds, and as a contrast a Chaplin film "Charlie at the Bank" of about 1915 vintage.

Believe it or not for about two hours the names of William George Bunter or any other of the famous characters were not heard once in that room - a unique experience.

A nice change but being what we are, it couldn't happen often; it certainly won't next month. For we shall have with us Roger Jenkins, stalwart member of the London O.B.B.C. and the subject of Roger's talk is "In the Remove Form Room". Roger's annual visits are always looked forward to and we are hoping for a big attendance. The date is February 12th. Fill the room, Northerners.

H. LECKENBY - Northern  
Section Correspondent.

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O.B.B.C. (MERSEYSIDE SECTION) ! JANUARY MEETING: Despite the bad weather there was an excellent attendance, and the meeting got off to a good start at 7 o'clock with the chairman's opening remarks, followed by the report on the section's financial position. The opinions of those present on the latest Annual were heard; it was agreed unanimously that an excellent job had been done in regard to both contents and production.

Then followed a discussion on Herbert's visit to us at our February meeting; we are all looking forward to this date and are hoping for a record attendance.

After refreshments, we dealt with the New Year Party to be

held on January 16th. The final arrangements were made, and we feel sure the event will be as big a success as on previous occasions.

Followed Frank Case's "Tail" quiz: a simple game based on name endings, which appeared to afford good entertainment to the contestants. The joint winners were Mr. Laffey and Mr. Coldwell, none of the other entrants being far behind. The meeting closed at 10 p.m. after a very pleasant and enjoyable evening.

FRANK CASE,

Hon. Secretary.

FOR SALE (ALSO WANTED) GEMS, MAGNETS, LEES, S.O.L., BOYS FRIEND LIBS. F. BOTTOMLEY, 48 DOWNHILLS PARK ROAD, LONDON, N.17.

WANTED: STORIES BY JACK NORTH, RICHARD RANDOLPH, RANDOLPH RYLE, PARTICULARLY SCHOOL, CRICKET AND FOOTBALL YARNS. BROSTER, PRIM-ROSE COTTAGE, KINVER, STOURBRIDGE.

WANTED: SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY (FIRST and SECOND SERIES ONLY). YOUR PRICE PAID FOR GOOD COPIES. SERIAL NUMBERS AND SERIES TO:- JOSEPHINE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

WANTED - CHUMS BOUND VOLUMES (OR MONTHLY NUMBERS) Nov. 1920 - Oct. 1921, Nov. 1922 - Oct. 1923, Nov. 1919 - Oct. 1920, Nov. 1924 - Oct. 1925. H.G. MATTHEWS, ALDERNEY, CHANNEL ISLES.

CAPTAIN JUSTICE & CO.

by John Geal

What magic the name recalls to all old readers of the Modern Boy - Captain Justice & Co.!" - Typical of boyhood heroes of fiction and the stories about him and his happy band of followers called out to the spirit of adventure that lurks in every boy.

Of moderate height, slim built, dressed immaculately in white ducks, cap at a rakish angle and often a cigar stuck jauntily in the corner of his mouth. Essentially a man of action, quick witted and as shrewd as they make them. He first made his appearance in the Modern Boy in 1930 and in the first thrilling series he set out, with his right hand man genial Dr. O'Mally, a heavily built Irishman, to avenge his father who was ruined by crooked international financiers. In need of a Wireless Operator to aid his plans, he held up an ocean liner and kidnapped Len Conner and with him a fiery headed youngster "Midge", who was a stowaway aboard the same ship. Through this act, Capt. Justice became an Outlaw. Len and Midge, on being told the Captain's story, decided to throw in their lot with him and so the scene is set. Needless to say the series ends with vengeance complete.

Such a good response to this first series was received, that

the editor soon commissioned further adventures. Using a little known island in the South Atlantic as headquarters, Capt. Justice and Co. became Soldiers of Fortune, righting wrongs the world over. Soon they were joined by Prof. Flaznagel, a brilliant inventor, years before his time, who, scorned by the contemporary scientists, determined to show the world that his ideas were sound.

Financed by Capt. Justice's huge fortune, (for gold was found in quantity on Justice Island) the first thing that emerged from the Profs. fertile brain was a remarkable airship, (at this time 1931-2 airships were big news with the R100 and R101 always to the fore). This craft with a top speed of over 300 miles an hour was made of a special metal invented by the Professor called Tranzetonite, which under the action of Flaznagel's "Q Ray" became almost transparent - the ideal media for a quiet approach or on being hunted by foes. This invention enabled the Co. to journey world wide in style and made stories much more credible.

As time went on the yarns became more and more in demand, so the frequency of serials increased until towards the end of the Modern Boy they were appearing weekly. Over the course of the years the Captain became "respectable". At first an outlaw, he cleared his name and became a Gentleman Adventurer, being called in, time and time again by the British Government to save the country as well as helping sundry small states throughout the world to repel the forces of evil.

As you can imagine, all this left Captain Justice and Co. very little spare time, but even so they managed a couple of space trips to distant planets. When they weren't putting down a revolt in India, or putting pay to a mad African with a scheme for conquering the world with specially bred and trained giant ants, they were exploring underseas worlds or generally on tour looking for trouble.

To tell of the scope of the Profs. inventions and to give details of their adventures would fill the "C.D.", but the stories, besides appearing in the "M.B." were also running in the 4d. Boys Friend Lib. There are 20 or more Nos. in which the Modern Boy stories are retold.

I hope I have given some small insight to these grand characters from the pen of Murray Roberts, who alas passed away at the height of the popularity of these, his best loved creations.

But to all lovers of the Modern Boy and the Boys Friend Lib. the Captain lives on and here I would propose a toast -

"To a very gallant gentleman and his loyal band. To Captain Justice and Company".

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