

The **COLLECTORS'**  
**DIGEST**



Vol. 9 No. 103  
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JULY, 1955

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

## From the Editor's Chair

THE NINTH ANNUAL: Last month I said I would reveal some of the plans for the next Annual now only six months ahead. Well when I said that there was one article which I did not know about for it only came the other day. It was sent by a member who has not contributed to the Annual before, Percy North of Basingstoke, and believe me, its a jolly good effort. Its entitled "The Whartons of Wimford" and recalls vividly many of the happenings near by Wharton Lodge. What's more, Percy has drawn a map of the district. How many hours he spent over that only he knows; all I can say is the amount of trouble some of you will go to for love of our hobby simply staggers me.

Then there's another Greyfriars article from a stalwart whose work is also appearing in the Annual for the first time. This is "A Ramble Round Greyfriars" by Eric Humphreys. All I say about this is that it will be a fitting companion to the one mentioned above.

Well, that's a good start. What else? Plenty! Roger Jenkins is busy on "The Blue and White Magnets" and soon Eric Fayne will be similarly engaged on the Gems of the same period. No need to say more about that pair of reliables.

Next: Gerry Allison some time ago started on a big task preparing a list of how the Boys' Friend Rookwood stories were re-published in the S.O.L. He has had valuable help from several others.

Bill Lofts, that British Museum expert, will show you that he has not wasted his time there and Jack Wood, of course, will see that the Lee fans get their proper quota. Likewise the Sexton Blake Circle.

Now a word about myself. In the early days of the C.D. on the suggestion of the late R.A.H. Goodyear, I wrote an article "Streets of Memories". I felt in the mood, and the words flowed easily from my pen, you know how it is. Anyway though I say it myself, it brought me a lot of compliments. Well, whilst in London last year I was urged, seeing our numbers have trebled since then, to reprint it in the Annual. I could not see my way to do it then as it would have meant leaving something else out. However, it will probably be in this time. I am also well on with an article on the remarkable serials in the old time comics.

More good news. Geoff. Hockley is doing another of his breezy articles, this time on the famous pirate yarns by S. Walkey which ran for years in Chums.

Well that's enough to be going on with. Now its up to you. The forms accompany this number.

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MORE GOOD NEWS: A week or two ago I received a letter from one of our stalwarts, John Gocher, which gave me a thrill for he told me that Mr. Rex Hardinge, popular and prolific writer of Sexton Blake yarns wished to subscribe to the C.D. Needless to say I lost no time in writing Mr. Hardinge, who lives in the middle of Dartmoor, a perfect location for Blake yarns!

Soon I got a reply, a long friendly letter, full of the intimate tit-bits you fellows revel in. I hope to publish it in full next month. Meanwhile here's an extract, just to whet your appetites.

"Four of us at a coffee-stall in the dawn hours spinning a Blake yarn -- each taking it to a point and passing it on -- the finest Blake yarn ever told. But not one of us could remember a word when we revived next day. But Twy (H.W. Twyman) got an idea for a serial out of it - remember "The Next Move"?

Sounds good, doesn't it? And not only Blake fans will be interested for Robert Farish & Co. will be glad to hear that Mr. Hardinge was a staunch St. Jims fan.

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E.S. BROOKS VINDICATED: There was an extraordinary story in the "Sunday Pictorial" on June 12th concerning a boys' school called Cotswold College, which it alleged was run by two ex-jailbirds. Lee fans will be entitled to say "Who said E.S. Brooks exaggerated

with his St. Franks yarns?" What's more the headmaster called himself Dr. Barrington Davies! A real Brooksonian touch about that, don't you think?

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LETTERS: I was startled when I read Josie Packman's statement in Blakiana that in a year she only hears from about ten different Blake fans despite the fact that there's about one hundred who come in that category.

You know, so far as letter writing is concerned, our fraternity does vary. I get about 3,000 letters a year; that's an average of about ten per reader, but, of course, it doesn't work out that way. A good proportion write often, but not too often, some now and again; some put in a line or two when they renew their subs, some renew their subs but with no comment whatever. As very seldom does one cease to subscribe, it would appear that practically everyone is satisfied. That's very gratifying, but honestly letters do help no end especially when they comment on the contents, and they show that ones efforts are appreciated. So how about giving the postman more letters to deliver at 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich.

Yours sincerely,  
HERBERT LECKENBY.

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## BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN,  
27, ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

At the O.B.B. Club June Meeting, several members made complimentary mention of Blakiana. This of course is very pleasing, for there is quite a bit entailed in running even a section of the C. Digest; but how about readers generally? Assuming a hundred subscribers of our magazine read Blakiana (a reasonable estimate), in the course of a year I hear from about ten (different) readers! What about the rest of you? Incidentally, I have just completed my second year conducting Blakiana. Time flies!

Next month, among other things, there will be an article on Sexton Blake in the U.S.A. The information therein will be news to many of you (it was to me!). Mrs. Bardell, too, is getting

into her stride with her 'babblings'; there are some really choice ones to come.

My correspondence at present is at the rate of one letter a month. Perhaps someone would like to double it!

Oh yes - I forgot. No doubt you have been writing to Derek Ford, with material for his Consulting-Room Chat instead of writing to me.

Finally, on behalf of the Sexton Blake Circle, I am asked to say that a meeting will be held very shortly. All members will be advised at the earliest possible moment, in order that they may fit this in with their other arrangements.

JOSIE PACKMAN.

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SEXTON BLAKE - ANCIENT AND MODERN  
by Derek Adley

After reading a few of the Sexton Blake stories published in the PENNY PICTORIAL during the early part of this century, I can now fully appreciate the wonderful stories published in the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY and the UNION JACK.

To compare the Sexton Blake featured in the P. PICTORIAL with the Blake featured in the UNION JACK is like comparing chalk with cheese, and in my view, and surely to others, a completely different character altogether. The PENNY PICTORIAL version is devoid of all the little actions and ways of Sexton Blake as we know him - in fact, he is a cold, matter-of-fact type of man that might be any other private detective rather than Sexton Blake.

I found the stories that I read in the P. PICTORIAL that featured the great detective fairly dry reading matter, but perhaps some excuse can be made for them as these were obviously published with a certain amount of curtailment and refinement.

It seemed as if the publishers were doing their best to give their publications an air of respectability, and nothing violent or lurid was to appear in the stories they published; often the phrase 'a paper you can safely take home for the whole family' would appear on the covers of their publications. The trend to reform the reading matter of the British public was the thing of the day; unfortunately some of the latter literature was to become far more lurid than it had ever been.

Another reason, and probably the main reason for the drabness of these stories, was the absence of Tinker - it's hard to realise

his true importance until you miss him, for Tinker gave the stories colour, and also brought out the kindness and feeling in Sexton Blake; without him Blake was a mere name.

I have heard that Andrew Murray was the author responsible for many of these early PENNY PICTORIAL yarns. I should imagine he found it a bit of a job to condense a story of merit in the space allocated to him, though perhaps the editor felt that these short stories were more appreciated by the adult readers; if they could have read the stories to come perhaps things might have been different.

As all the P. PICTORIAL yarns I have read were early issues I cannot say whether the quality of the stories, so far as Blake was concerned, improved in any way, but I should imagine that they did, considering the fact that they had a fairly long run.

Coming to more recent times, nearly half a century later, the A. Press published a series of Sexton Blake yarns in their flourishing comic paper KNOCK-OUT, and I, as a loyal Blake fan, proceeded to purchase this paper with the hopes that perhaps something good would come of this venture (a future UNION JACK maybe). Tinker of course was featured in these yarns, which was one good thing, but these stories were completely detrimental to Blake; also, if I said that the PENNY PICTORIAL yarns were short, then I must say they were like full-length novels compared with these yarns - no author could possibly pen a good yarn in so small a space.

Loyal as I am, I must confess that after the first four or five stories, I continued to purchase the paper but ceased to read the Blake stories - I did notice the title of one story mentioning a 'space man'; I couldn't bear to read it.

No, once again this was not the genuine Blake, or Tinker for that matter; these yarns were aimed at the very juvenile readers, and hopeless from our point of view. The stories were eventually replaced by the old Sexton Blake Picture Story - it would appear that even the young 'uns didn't like them.

So there we have two examples of how Blake was pushed first at the adult readers and then at the very young ones, and in both cases he was a mere 'also ran' compared with OUR Blake. Nevertheless, all this only goes to prove what a success Blake was - and could be now - for the A. Press to hold the character for so long and to use him in stories for people of all ages. What a pity then couldn't make a good job of it and publish a weekly

paper SEXTON BLAKE'S OWN.

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SYMPTOMATOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

(Reproduced from PUNCH, dated 27 April 1955, and submitted for inclusion in BLAKIANA by J.L. Jukes.)

That sinister bifurcation from the path of the novel proper, the narrative of criminological research, otherwise known as the detective-story, has, during recent years, been the subject of exploration by many distinguished critics; and it might well be averred that a revaluation, now long overdue, of the Sexton Blake saga could prove indispensable to the complete understanding of this genre. In point of primogeniture alone Blake is, since the passing of his illustrious predecessor Sherlock Holmes, the oldest private detective still practising in the literature of this field, and may thus be accounted the DOYEN of the species: evidently a pupil of Holmes, he shares many of the physical and sartorial attributes of the Master and was pictorially depicted, during his first period, with aquiline features, wearing a dressing-gown and smoking a curvilinear pipe; his domicile, too, is situated in the Baker Street neighbourhood, where he participates in a joint-tenancy with his youthful assistant Tinker and pet bloodhound Pedro (it will be regretted by older readers that the latter plays little or no role in Blake's current investigations and is, indeed, in many cases denied a mention: though, perhaps, for humanitarian reasons the retirement of the canine veteran may be esteemed a matter for congratulation).

Blake, however, differs from Holmes in that his deductive faculties are less frequently exercised and his methods more straightforward in their preponderant style; nor is he addicted to the subcutaneous injection of narcotics as a means of stimulus: this specific dissimilarity may be attributable to the fact that the series was designed initially for a predominantly juvenile audience. In this quondam epoch the memoirs of the great investigator appeared hebdomadally in the pages of the UNION JACK (later incorporated with DETECTIVE WEEKLY), and mensually in the editions of the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY, four 60,000-word volumes of which were published each month. The industrious and devoted chroniclers worked under the seal of anonymity and the benevolent aegis of the Amalgamated Press: a cellular group which may be feasibly compared

in function and structure, with the latter-day Collective Writing Schools in the United States of America; but later (as with the co-existential scenarists of aphonic films) the incognito of the authors was removed, and such names as Anthony Skene, Gilbert Chester, Warwick Jardine, and, of course, that of the late Gwyn Evans, the pioneer and leading member of the movement, will be remembered by students of the intermediate, DETECTIVE WEEKLY, period, during the early and middle nineteen-thirties.

From two recently-published works included in the Library (the monthly quota of volumes has been reduced by half, though the actual format remains unchanged: sixty-four pages of bi-columnar typography, the letterpress being ingeniously varied in size, on occasion to keep pace with the tempo of the narrative) it would appear that Blake's immemorial antagonists - Gunga Das, the Indian, and Monsieur Zenith, the Albino, for instance - have retired, like Pedro, from the scene of action; and also that a new, more sophisticated tendency, heralded by the incorporation of a strong feminine interest, is now in the ascendant: this note is struck by Mr. Anthony Parsons in the opening sentence of THE CASE OF THE WICKED THREE:

'It was a girl's shapely legs and a girl's curly head that really started the whole thing'.

Peyton, the unscrupulous accountant, is 'a connoisseur of the female sex', and united without benefit of clergy to his helpmeet, an appetizing polyglot adventuress named Judy ('come into the library', she whispered as she kissed him with her usual abandon), since Peyton's wife refuses to free him from the marital bond. ('Her church did not countenance divorce, nor did she. To divorce him would be a sin, and Ann did not intend to sin' - phrases portending, perhaps, the introduction of theological themes analogous to those already regnant in other branches of contemporary fiction.)

Though profane language does not figure in the text ('Oh heavens!' 'Hell's bells,' and 'By Stephen!' being the strongest expletives employed - the latter, oddly enough, favoured by villain and police-superintendent alike), the consumption of alcohol is freely indulged:

'The cork flew with a pleasing pop and Tinker expertly filled the four glasses already placed in readiness.'

We are told, however, that 'it was not often that the Baker Street pair celebrated in champagne at their own home': the peccant trio - two of whom remain unpunished at the end, owing to absence

of proof - are much less temperate in their habits. In THE CASE OF THE CRIMINAL'S DAUGHTER Blake is more successful both in solving the problem of missing diamonds propounded by Mr. Hugh Clevely, and in acting as Nemesis to the culprits concerned: his eyesight, nevertheless, is admitted to be inferior to the 'microscopic' visionary perception of Tinker; and it is emphatically to be hoped that his ratiocinative powers will not be impaired, also, by the onset of Anno Domini: for Sexton Blake is one of the few fictional private investigators who, despite the symptomatic changes in subject-matter referred to above, remains unaffected by transatlantic influences - an institution unequivocally indigenous to our British shores.

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MORE BABBLINGS OF BARDELL

by Victor Colby

"Which it's a letter for you sir," announced Mrs. Bardell as she entered the Baker Street sitting room, breathing prodigiously after climbing the stairs, "and I'm sure," she added, with an irate glance at Tinker, "if it's a case to break the spell of hidleness which 'as fell on that Master Tinker the last four mortal days it will be a blessing, seein' he's had nothink to amuse himself with except that mischief which a well known party finds for hidle 'ands to do."

"When I feels inclined to complain sir, there's nobody on this mortal earth as could say it was about trifles - "

"Trifles are jolly good," interjected Tinker, "especially with plenty of old sherry in them. Have we got some for lunch today?"

Mrs. Bardell gave a terrific snort. "I says nothing to you sir, nor to any mortal soul about his teaching that 'ound Pedro to worrit the doormats, pretendin' of their bein' rabbits, nor did I make any remarks about the mornin' he comes moochin' round my kitchen to find a chicken bone for Pedro, an' givin' the dog one, though there was 'arf a chicken attached to that same bone at the time. But when he takes one of my old boots from the bottom cupboard, and makes Pedro smell it, an'then pretend as they was trackin' down a murderess, an' that dog bouncin' in on me, unexpected in the kitchen - though playful it might have been, as I would be the last to disallow - but at the same time upsettin' my pastry bowl an' sendin' a clean rollin' pin flyin' into the hashes -"

"But you weren't making hash that day," put in Tinker.

"Into the hashes under the grate," snorted Mrs. Bardell, "Then it's time that the kindest tongue was loosened and complaints made. And I hopes as you'll speak an' deduce him to mend his ways, sir, before he's fit only for a deformatory school - young rip as he is, an' that dog another, it bein' the problem of my life deciding which is the worst hanimal of the two."

(U.J. 872 "The Clue of the Golden Hair")

Mrs. Bardell came puffing and panting up the stairs, and wiping her hands on her apron, handed Sexton Blake a slip of card-board.

"A gentleman to see you sir - in a 'urry, as per'aps you'll 'ave 'eard!" she snorted indignantly "I trust you'll inform 'im sir, that my bell ain't there for 'im to hexercise 'is strength hon. Hanyone would think as we was hall deaf in the 'ouse."

(U.J. 688 "In Double Harness")

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MY COLLECTION

No. 9 by Ronald Hodgson

I first came into contact with the Gem and Magnet about 1935 at the age of ten, so only had about four years of them before the war brought them to an untimely close. Had saved quite a large number of issues, but then, constant lending out to friends found my stock getting quite low, as most of them never came back. Finally, all I had left were the 1938 and 1939 Holiday Annuals and the Mr. Lamb series of Magnets. I then decided that whatever happened I would keep these, so they were carefully stored away for future reading.

The next I heard of our old school friends was in 1945 whilst serving in the Forces. We were being posted, and having read all my magazines, I borrowed one from the chappy on the next seat and imagine my surprise when I came across an article entitled, "The Man who Created Billy Bunter!" This was quickly read through and then again, more slowly, and I learnt for the first time who Frank Richards, Martin Clifford and Owen Conquest really were. That article was kept and is now with my collection.

After demob., I read the "Slim Jim" series again and thought that I should never see any more of the grand old papers. Then along came the Bunter books and the Tom Merry books. These were quickly purchases and the years seemed to fall away, as once more

we were sat under the gimlet eyes of old Quelchy or laughing at Guissy fishing tomatoes out of his best topper.

Then, one day in 1952 on glancing through the Exchange and Mart (how that name keeps cropping up in our fraternity) an advert caught my eye. Old Boys' Book Collector now ready. Frank Richards writes No. 1. So away went my 2/- by the next post to Tom Hopperton. When the mag. arrived I found that I had been way out in my previous thoughts, and that a great many people were interested in Charles Hamilton's works. From two of the adverts in that issue I started to collect again in a small way - mainly Gems - and I managed to get the set of 36 page issue Gems quite easily.

The sad day then arrived when the O.B.B.C. had to close down because of its editors health. But in it, as you will remember, was an advert of old boys books etc. for sale. When that list arrived I sent off for a few more Gems and Schoolboys Owns and a book which I had seen mentioned in Tom Hopperton's articles (but never having seen it advertised, thought that too must have gone the way of the old papers) - the C.D.

Once again I was proved wrong, so out came the writing pad and more letters, this time to our friend Herbert Leckenby. Many friendly letters from him and finally the joining of the Northern Section Club at Leeds, and the chance to meet lots of Charles Hamilton's followers and have some grand chats with them. And what a sight to see when Gerry brought in part of the Club Library.

Haven't really said much about my collection which is what this series is intended to be, but apart from the Autobiography, the Bunter Books, Tom Merry Books, Gold Hawk Books and the newer Annuals, I have at present two Holiday Annuals, the full set of 36 page Gems, about two dozen of the 1930's era and one issue of 1919, about thirty Magnets and six Schoolboys Owns. Plus the first of a new series of Gems, my first letter from our Grand Old Chief - Frank Richards.

Not a great collection by any means, but one that has given me in the past, as it will in the future, hours of pleasure and enjoyment.

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W A N T E D - CHUMS BOUND VOLUMES (OR, MONTHLY OR WEEKLY PARTS)  
1919, 1920, 1921, 1923. MATTHEWS, 38 VICTORIA STREET, ALDERNEY,  
CHANNEL ISLES.

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WANTED: Aldines Aldines. Also Prince Pippin and Tales of Little People. P.J. LAFFEY, 32 GALSWORTHY AVENUE, LIVERPOOL, 21.

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# HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

The "Empire News" June 26th said with a big headline:

## BUNTER IS BACK!

BILLY BUNTER is coming back to TV on Saturday, July 9. This is the week's best news for children - and a lot of grown-ups too.

Producer Joy Harington, who first brought the Fat Boy of Greyfriars to the screen three years ago, tells me that 83-year-old Frank Richards has turned out six completely new yarns - "as fresh as anything he wrote for THE GEM and MAGNET 30 years ago."

They'll be seen fortnightly.

Bunter will again be played by 32-year-old Gerald Campion, who is only 5ft. 5in. tall but turns the scales at 12 stone.

Unluckily, Kynaston Reeves can't appear in his perfect part as Mr. Quelch, the form master.

He is already snapped-up by the TV drama department.

(Note: I shall appreciate your views on these new stories.

H.L.)

MORE HEADLINES: The Wolverhampton "Express and Star" May 25th, reporting the case of a schoolboy who took all ten wickets in an innings for six runs gave it the heading "Boy of Greyfriars Breed" and commented "It was the sort of thing we used to associate with the boys' magazines. Harry Wharton might have done it, or Bob Cherry, or even Tom Merry, because they were very exceptionally versatile fellows."

Keen Greyfriars students might suggest that Wharton and Cherry were more batsmen than bowlers, and St. Jim's fans ask why "even" Tom Merry.

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Now a note from Anthony Baker.

Following on my article "Schools — And Plenty of Them" in the May C.D., Gerald Allison tells me that the Packsaddle stories originally appeared in Gems 1405 - 1434 in 1935. Percy North has kindly sent me the following interesting information:

- Courtfield County School: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. "Chuckles", about 1914.
- Netherby and Beechwood Academy: Pseudonym, Martin Clifford. Marvel N.S. No. 208. A story dealing with the early days of Hurree Singh. Netherby was his first school, and when it was closed, he was transferred to Beechwood. There may have been previous stories.
- Rylcombe: F.R. did not write the "Empire" stories (see C.D. 28), but he did write "The School under Canvas" serial in the early years of the Gem. Pseudonym: Prosper Howard. Reprint:- B.F.L.
- St. Freda's: Pseudonym, Martin Clifford. B.F.3d.Lib. 367. Reprints: Empire and Gem. Featured Cousin Ethel. Different school from that already listed.
- St. Kits: "Empire" serial reprinted from B.F.3d.Lib. 46.
- St. Winifred's: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Marvel N.S. No. 56.
- St. Winifred's: Pseudonym, Martin Clifford. B.F.3d. Lib. No. 67. Almost certainly a different school from the above.
- St. Wode's: Pseudonym Charles Hamilton. Serial in Empire Lib. (N.S.) Commenced in No. 11.

Mr. North also suggests that the St. John's stories by 'Clifford Owen' in Diamond Lib. Nos. 36 and 48, were by Charles Hamilton. We cannot be certain of the author's identity yet, but though the style is rather unlike the usual Hamiltonian one, and there are no familiar character names, the pseudonym is interesting, and the leading character a carbon copy of D'Arcy.

Yours sincerely, ANTHONY BAKER.

(Note: The stories in the Boys Friend Library No's, 46 and 67, first appeared in Pluck as "The Rivals of St. Kits" and "The Secret of St. Winifreds." H.L.)

Here support for Robert Farish.

"OF PUREST RAY SERENE"

By Donald Webster

There is a lot of truth in the old adage - "First love - best love" as far as I am concerned, for my first love was "THE GEM" and after all these years it remains so.

My first copy was passed on to me by an older boy (I can see its Blue cover (sorry Len) now. What number it was I cannot recollect, but it would be about No. 150. I do remember, however, I was seven years of age, and an illustration of Gussy intrigued me.

Not long afterwards I found a copy of "The Magnet" and whilst

its coloured cover fascinated me, the story inside hadn't the same effect on my childish imagination, so I did not purchase it every week - for a penny was a penny those days, and I had to make a choice - THE GEM it was.

The inter-House and School rivalry appealed to my youthful instincts, but later the advent of "The Toff" definitely decided me that St. Jims was first in my affections.

I loved - and still do - that excellent character, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. One can feel sorry for him when he is the victim of a jape, feel exasperated with him for his aggravating habit of keeping his friends waiting through his fastidiousness in appearance; but one feels proud when he scores a goal from outside left or hits a boundary on Little Side (funny how Little Side and Big Side appear both in "The Magnet" and "The Gem"). D'Arcy's code of honour was a great example throughout the history of "The Gem", but although his tact and judgement were usually lacking, his chums could easily apply it to him. What a pity Gussy was shown as a gullible ass in the early issues of "The Gem", but I think Martin Clifford must have relented for The Swell of St. Jims proves quite a formidable adversary in the later stories.

To my mind, the Golden Era of the Gem was undoubtedly the year 1913-14 - a period alas missed by the under 40 members of our fraternity, although they may have read some of the reprints. The arrival of Tolbot, Koumi Rao, and Hammond, "The Rival Patrols," Captain Tom Merry are merely a few series I remember so well.

Before I conclude this article, I must express my appreciation of the work of the late Mr. R.J. Macdonald. His scenes of the school quadrangle and interiors of the studies evoked my silent admiration, to say nothing of his drawings relative to sport. Some say his characters could not be recognised, but I always placed his masters. His D'Arcy was peerless!

I could write so much more enumerating my favourite yarns such as all "The Toff" series, the coming of Cardew, Levison's Reformation, the "Outram" series, and as for those pre 1917 Xmas and Double Nos., such as "The Housemaster's Homecoming", "Nobody's Study," and "The Mystery of The Painted Room", well, as Eric Fayne so aptly put it "every story was a Gem" - and of purest ray serene.

Let's raise our caps to Martin Clifford and Co. - thanks for the good old "GEM".

N.B. Take heart, Mr. Farish, there are many loyal readers of the Gem who are "born to blush unseen", not all of whom are sub-

scribers to the C.D., but who nevertheless correspond with me for nostalgic reasons, and maybe there are many more that you and I will never even hear of. Yes, me will certainly see "The Gem" gets a hearing in the C.D. occasionally.

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

By Roger M. Jenkins

No. 11 - Gems 824-831

Charles Hamilton's especial genius lay in the skilful portrayal of the motivating springs of human conduct. Even his bitterest critic, George Orwell, was forced to admit that every one of his schoolboy characters was different, but this was only half the story. It is not sufficient for an author merely to label his characters; he has to explain precisely why they act as they do on the particular occasion, and this Charles Hamilton never failed to explain most convincingly. There is no doubt that, for sheer presentation of character, he never surpassed himself in his stories about Cardew of St. Jim's.

Ralph Reckness Cardew was the character to appeal to the older readers; volatile and whimsical, indolent and energetic, the perfect gentleman and the perfect blackguard, intelligent enough to acknowledge good advice but too perverse to act upon it, the junior who might lie to authority, but never to his fellows, above all quite unrepentant ("Pretty Fanny's way, you know"), he is the character one never tires to read about. The various facets of his character were never so well described as in Gems 824-831, a series which was satisfactorily reprinted in Nos. 258 and 260 of the Schoolboys' Own Library. The trouble began when he refused to turn up to games practice, and dodged Kildare. He resorted practically to a subterfuge which enabled him to get away with it the first time, but Tom Merry put a spoke in his wheel on the next occasion, and thereafter Cardew decided that, if he was going to be forced to play games, he would become junior house captain and junior school captain himself.

How he set about this task makes intriguing reading; with deep-laid cunning he succeeded in putting Tom Merry in the wrong at every turn, in making the fellows laugh at "the saintly Thomas", in winning popularity for himself. The whole series was set against a background of football, and every match was not just a pointless and boring description of a game (as was so often the custom of the substitute writers) but an integral part of the

development of the story of Cardew's struggle - and success. We know that Tom Merry is the hero, and yet we hope, for the sake of the drama, that Cardew's plot will succeed. And it does.

For a while Tom Merry did his best to back up the new captain loyally but a personal bitterness soon grew up between them, and at a holiday at Eastwood House Cardew sank to roguery in an attempt to wreak his vengeance. But in the end, Cardew tired of the position, and consented to another election being held, at which he stood again; there was a tie on the voting, and so he tipped the balance by giving Tom his vote. And on this characteristically quixotic note ended the story of Cardew's captaincy - a series which ranks among the best that ever appeared in that grand old paper, the Gem.

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POTTED PERSONALITIES. No. 11 (Second Series)

FERRERS LOCKE

The famous detective appeared at St. Jim's frequently in Blue cover days, and for some years before he came on the scene in the Magnet. On numerous occasions, Tom Merry acted as his boy assistant, even going as a new boy to another school on work for the detective in one story.

As late as 1913, one can find an advertisement in the Magnet, drawing attention to a series in another paper, and describing Locke as "the famous detective who has often appeared in association with Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's."

The detective's most memorable show at St. Jim's was in the case of the trapping of Captain Mellish, the Mysterious X, two superb stories about 1912. I am not at all sure that this was not his last appearance at St. Jim's.

But in the halcyon days of the Magnet he featured in some of that paper's most outstanding series. It was a brilliant plan to let him take charge of the expedition to China, when we saw him as a fully-qualified sea-captain and a master linguist. Locke, as "THE BEGGAR OF SHANTUNG", was a master-piece of character-writing.

As a detective, his two most memorable appearances were in the RAVENSPUR GRANGE series and the CAVANDALE ABBEY series, a couple of holiday masterpieces. He was less successful in tracking Slim Jim, the kidnapper of Mr. Quelch, and one has a sneaking feeling that his belated success in this case was due entirely to the Bounder.

A pleasant, well-written character, whose introduction into

the stories was always welcome.

When considering Ferrers Locke, one naturally think of Jack Drake, his assistant. Personally, I was always slightly irritated by "Jack Drake, at your service", but that may be due to my poor taste. More likely, I preferred to have the great man himself on the scene. What's your opinion.

\* \* \* \* \*

POTTED PERSONALITIES No.12 (Second Series)

WUN LUNG

In the Greyfriars Chinees we have something of a paradox. He is undoubtedly a lovable character, and we would not be without him, yet for many years he was one of the least believable of Frank Richards' creations. It is difficult to credit that an English public school, which naturally had an official uniform, would have permitted Wun Lung and his brother to attend classes in flowing oriental robes. Yet for more than twenty years Wun Lung wore these garments, plus the inevitable pigtail. Further, Wun, the son of a rich Chinese merchant, spoke the pidgin English of the coolie class.

Over the decades the little Chinese appeared in many hilarious episodes in which he either "poisoned" bullying seniors or made weird eastern dishes out of Mrs. Kebble's cat. In Red Cover days he featured in a number of interesting if not very noteworthy stories, once in a weird yarn when he became an opium addict, again when he rescued Hop Hi from a Chinese kidnapper, and yet again when he was apparently carried out to sea on a huge kite and returned to Greyfriars to haunt Loder.

But it was in the glorious China Series of the early thirties that he really came into his own, and Frank Richards cleverly modified and explained his Chinese characters, ably assisted by the artist, Shields. For the first time we had Wun Lung presented as a really believable lad from the Far East. He featured again a few years later in the Dr. Sin series, a set of stories which are fairly memorable.

One thing is clear. The Greyfriars stage would be the poorer without Wun Lung coming on the scene occasionally. What you think?

\* \* \* \* \*

A REAL LIFE MR. QUELCH

By Edward Davey

It is often said that Greyfriars was and is the most popular

of all the Hamilton Schools; this popularity being due in great measure to certain well esteemed characters.

Some of these such as the immortal Bunter, his long suffering Form Master, (Mr. Quelch), Coker, his also very long suffering Form Master, (Mr. Prout), and certain others are often thought to be so exaggerated as to pass credibility.

We can say that this is certainly true of Bunter but not necessarily so of the others.

All the characters were taken from life and then built up. Mr. Quelch was suggested by a well known Victorian "DON" famed for being "a beast but a just beast". I, myself have thought him rather overdrawn but the following quotation strongly suggests otherwise.

"In the Directors' Luncheon Room at Euston Station, (it is now used as the dining-room of the principal officers of the London Midland Region), the walls are hung with portraits of past chairman. Only one of them is in colour, and that one, far larger than the rest, hangs in the place of chief honour above the fireplace. The portrait is of Sir Richard Moon. A lantern-jawed face with side-whiskers looks at you coldly out of the corners of his eyes. You feel that he knows all about you and has no high opinion of you. In life he must have been terrifying indeed, and one of his modern successors, seeing the picture for the first time, whispered to a friend, 'My word, look at that! No compromise there!' Indeed there was not. He was a hard, merciless man, but he gave justice, he spoke the truth, and he broke no promises. He spared nobody, and certainly not himself. For years he was the North Western in his own person, keeping the whole detail of it in his grip.

One morning while waiting for his train at Coventry he noticed three engines idling in the station blowing off steam. He asked, but no one could tell him what they were supposed to be doing. For weeks and weeks everybody heard about those engines. He never opened up and he never unbent. His guiding force was simply duty and a real love for the railway. He picked his men with minute care. When one was appointed, Moon would send for him. He came trembling into the presence. Moon would stare at him in hard and piercing silence. Then he would say: "Good morning. Remember first that you are a gentleman; remember next that you are a North Western officer, and that whatever you promise you must perform. Therefore be careful what you promise, but having promised, take care that you perform it! No other word was said. It was

alarming, but a man knew where he stood."

We often read of Quelch's gimlet eyes and how his face set like iron when confronted with some flagrant act of rebellion on the part of the Bounder or Wharton in his days of disgrace.

This would come quite naturally to Sir Richard and had he been a school master he would most assuredly have been capable of giving stiff sixes and severe floggings.

The whackfulness would certainly have been terrific, but just as certainly strict justice and straightforward dealing would have been the esteemed *sine qua non*.

Like Quelch too, Sir Richard was a whale on punctuality. It is said that a very high official indeed came into his office at 9.5 one morning and was greeted with a barked:- "Good morning, Sir! North Western hours are nine till six!"

The Remove may often complain of their "beak" but it seems to me that he could have been worse!

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I've just realised I am running short of Hamilton articles. So get busy with your pens if you want to keep your fair quota.

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MAGNET TITLES: (Continued) 1453, The Spectre of Polpelly; 1454, The House of Mystery; 1455, Galleon Gold; 1456, Bunter's Bid for a Fortune; 1457, The Boy Who Wouldn't Make Friends; 1458, The Outsider; 1459, The Form-Master's Favourite; 1460, The Remove Recruit; 1461, The Trail of Adventure; 1462, Rolling down to Rio; 1463, The Wolf of Brazil; 1464, Shadowed in South America; 1465, The Vengeance of the Wolf; 1466, The Greyfriars Diamond Diggers; 1467, The Prisoner of Macaw Island; 1468, The Millionaire Stowaway; 1469, His Record Condemned Him; 1470, Not Wanted at Greyfriars.

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A V A I L A B L E MAGNET, GEMS, HOLIDAY ANNUALS, NELSON LEES 1919-33, BUNTER BOOKS, S.O.L.'s, GREYFRIARS, ST. FRANKS, MARVELS, BOYS MAGAZINES, UNION JACKS, SEXTON BLAKE LIBS., DETECTIVE WEEKLIES, POLICE BUDGETS, 1893-1900, SCOUT, CHUMS, BOYS FRIEND LIBRARIES, 1st 2nd Series. BOYS REALMS, BUFFALO BILL LIBS & NOVELS 1915-30, CLAUDE DUVALS, DICK TURPINS, TRAVEL AND INVENTION, NICK CARTERS, DETECTIVE LIBS., including No. 1, FILM MAGS. AND ANNUALS 1920 to 40, PLAY PICTORIALS, THEATRE WORLDS, BOOKS FOR THE BAIRNS, WIDE WORLDS, ADVENTURES, WIZARDS, ROVERS, TRIUMPHS, RAILWAY AND MANY OTHERS, OVER 30,000 Mags. and Books to hand. SEND LISTS OF WANTS. (cont'd over)

S.A.E. PLEASE.

WANTED S.B. LIBS. 1915-35, UNION JACKS, 1905-23, EARLY FASHION,  
MODERN BOYS, C.D.'s 1 -35, also ANNUALS 1, 2, and 3,  
RONALD ROUSE, 3 ST. LEONARDS TERRACE, GAS-HILL, NORWICH, NORFOLK.

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## LETTER BOX

NOTE THE DATE, JULY 9th

June 6th, 1955.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for the C.D. I was a little afraid that the railway strike might keep it away: but luckily it is a bantamweight. The present limit of eight ounces is something like a jolt on the solar plexus to a purveyor of light literature --- light in perusal but not so light in typescript! However, we must all hope that the trouble will soon be over, and the wheels turning again.

I was very interested by the remarks from Friend Lofts on Page 179. The story he mentions was specially written by me for the "Wonder Book of Comics" about six years ago. So far as I remember, it is the only story I ever wrote for Odham's: though at one time I was within measurable distance of writing regularly for that firm. That was a long time ago: in the nineteen-twenties or early thirties: precise dates always escape me. The idea was a new periodical run on school stories by Frank Richards. Naturally I liked the idea very much: but I had to realise that it would be hardly fair to Gem and Magnet for their author to appear as a rival in the field. So very reluctantly I had to tell Hinton that it couldn't be done. I rather wished that I had decided otherwise, when the K.O. came along in 1940. But who can foresee the future! "Quid sit futuram cras fuge quaerere" isn't always a wise motto, though it comes from my beloved Horace.

I am told that the new series of Bunter plays on T.V. will begin on July 9th, and run fortnightly. Luckily I had completed and despatched them before the G.P.O. ceased to function. By the way, our plump friend will be seen in the BBC Annual later in the year.

I had a very welcome visitor the other day; no other than Arthur Gorfain of Sydney and the "Silver Jacket". You can guess that it was a pleasant occasion. Did I wish that I was a few

decades younger and could fly out to Sydney!  
With kindest regards,  
Very sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

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## Nelson Lee Column

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By JACK WOOD  
NOSTAW, 328 Stockton Lane,  
YORK.

Before telling you something about a memorable visit during my recent summer holiday, here is the rest of Bernard Thorne's excellent article, which our editor had to cut short last month, on

### VIVIAN TRAVERS

(continued from last month)

It was a perfect piece of work, superbly judged and beautifully executed.

Slam.

The ball hissed through the air from Traver's foot and went towards the corner of the goal, low down and deadly. The Bannington goalie, at the last second, realised that this was a shot that could not be dealt with in a leisurely manner.

He flung himself full-length, but he was too late. The ball struck the back of the net, and rolled out over the line again. Every St. Frank's fellow present felt warmed towards Vivian Travers. In many ways he was a questionable sort of fellow; he was not above a dirty trick now and then. But it could not be denied that at sports he was proving himself 'the goods'. He had shown excellent form at the cricket during the summer, and now he was proving his

worth as a footballer.

There was something supremely fascinating in Travers's play. He never allowed himself to get flustered; he remained perfectly cool in all circumstances. When he took a shot, that shot was a 'scorcher', and his passes were gems of accuracy."

In the following issue (No. 130 First New Series) the game between Bannington Town and the Junior Eleven took place. Before an enormous crowd, Travers again showed his consummate skill. As the result of an individual effort from the half way line, when he dribbled the ball past man after man to give Bob Christine the chance to score, St. Franks held the Town to a two-all draw.

We, who had regularly read the Nelson Lee Library from the earlier and more balmy days, realised that a change was coming over the spirit of our dream, when we awoke one morning in January 1930 to find St. Franks burnt to the ground and the boys scattered to the four corners of the globe. We followed, with a lack of enthusiasm, the adventures of Nelson Lee's Cub Detective Academy. We heard, as in a trance, the boys of St. Franks accept their late Headmaster's instructions with a grated 'O.K. Chief!' And from that moment our almost fanatical zest for the old paper began to wane. It was not until August of that year that our beloved school rose, Phoenix-like, from the flames, and it was "As You Were at St. Franks."

But was it? Somehow the old magic had gone. Vivian Travers was no longer the cool, self-assured fellow that we had, over so brief a period, grown to love. Surrounded by a crowd of new juniors known as the "Red Hots" - all of whom had been given the old Travers personality, Vivian was thrust unceremoniously into the background with Reggie Pitt, Buster Boots and Bob Christine, only to be dragged forward in such puerile series as "Traver's Trouble Treasure" (2nd. New Series No. 45.) And in the unaccustomed glare of the foot-lights, we viewed a new Travers - bewildered, frightened, irritated: the victim of a welter of highly improbable hoaxes engineered by the Red Hots.

But with 2nd New Series 19-93, Travers for a short space became almost the old Travers. It was an excellent series such as Mr. Brooks alone could write: mystery piled on mystery, with uncanny incidents following prolifically upon the arrival of an ancient Egyptian ring, which Mr. Travers had sent his son as a curio. Ezra Quirke, made a welcome return, to warn Travers that the ring was evil and urge him to destroy it. Travers had refused, and from that moment, there had been weird happenings and supernatural

apparitions galore; terminating in the arrival of an Egyptian mummy, which had risen from its sarcophagus in the dead of night. Through all these happenings, ending with his abduction in the middle of a football match, Travers had exhibited the old Travers nerve, until finally, aided by Nipper, Reggie Pitt, Handforth and other stalwarts, the mystery was unravelled in the typical E.S.B. manner.

Little more was seen or heard of Travers in the last sixty issues of the Second New Series. With the Third New Series, and a re-hashed version of the Old Series appearing weekly, we felt that we had said goodbye to him; and were, indeed, in the process of saying farewell to the Nelson Lee Library - a presentiment that was sadly accurate, for within seven months, the Third New Series terminated and the paper came to a tragic end. With it passed forever St. Francis' College, and the schoolboy adventures that had brightened the lives of two generations of youngsters. With it also ended the career of Vivian Travers, cool, suave, schoolboy enigma - gambler and sportsman, and one of Edwy Searles Brooks's finest St. Frank's characters.

F I N I S

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And now for my own piece of good news. A week or two ago I was on holiday in the south of England and after a brief, but pleasant, renewal of acquaintance with staunch Leeites Charles Churchill and his brother George in Glorious Devon, I moved eastwards to Bournemouth. From there I journeyed one day into the historic Hardy country south west of Salisbury where, in the heart of country hallowed by our early Saxon ancestors, I found a typical rambling old village vicarage.

There I met for the first time the Rev. J.H.M. Stainforth, who has told us so much about his great father, the late Dr. John Stainforth, of Hinderwell, better known to us, of course, as Maxwell Scott, creator of Nelson Lee. For more than an hour I listened as memories of his father crowded back and he told me something of the background of this part of juvenile literature.

He recalled Scott's fascination for the stories of Sherlock Holmes and his predecessor the Frenchman, Le Coq, which influenced him to create a modern version for younger readers. That was how Nelson Lee came to be born, and Scott's thoroughness became a by-word. With 6,000-odd words to turn out at a time he had no time

to avoid some of his many characteristic cliches, about which his wife used to laugh on many occasions.

But Scott was noted too for his keenness for details. If Lee left England by such and such a boat, depend upon its accuracy, for the Scott household resembled a Cooks' travel bureau as the author checked timings with Bradshaw or folders from all parts of the world. Scott used to agree that many readers couldn't care two hoots by what trainor boat Lee made his journey, but he used to say that he wanted to be sure Lee could have made the journey he was supposed to be making. Scott loved the stories which took Lee across the world, for they could be ended at any time if the editors felt the serials were becoming unpopular.

Mr. Stainforth recalled that his father's opinion was that Sidney Drew was the best of the other authors as he had a style which was far above anyone else's. About artists, however, Scott was frequently caustic as, naturally, he couldn't always get the artist he wanted for a particular story.

Mr. Stainforth recalled, too, a visit he paid as a boy to the home of Henry St. John, one of the most prolific contributors to juvenile literature. A big, hearty "type", he kept bull terriers and could not be persuaded to do any writing until 11 p.m. when all was quiet in the house.

Then, fortified with lashings of hot coffee, he would sit down at his typewriter and bang away until he completed his 6,000 words or so about 3 or 4 a.m. As he often had half a dozen different serials on the go at once he would then push his completed manuscript into an envelope and post it to the editor without bothering to check mis-spellings, erasures, or even inconsistencies in detail. What the editor used to think about it was a matter for conjecture; at any rate Henry St. John kept on writing for years with success.

Unfortunately at this stage Mr. Stainforth had to adjourn for a mothers' union meeting, so in familiar words I bade a reluctant farewell to this pleasant reminder of happy days 50-odd years ago, and returned to Bournemouth with memories of very enjoyable company.

(NOTE: Gladys Cooper, famous actress confirms that her half-brother was "the worlds worst typist. H.L.)

WANTED: Nelson Lees, 1st New Series Only. Please State Price, Condition and Series. Numbers Available. NORMAN PRAGNELL, 33 BRAE STREET, LIVERPOOL, 7, LANCs.

NELSON LEE AND THE COMANCHE INDIANS

By J.R. Swan.

Nelson Lee, while on one of his travels that took him into Indian Country out in the Wild West, had a narrow escape from death when he and two companions were captured by Comanche Indians.

His two companions were stripped naked and tied to stakes while Nelson Lee's life was spared - by all things - an alarm clock.

The reason for this being that in the short struggle that ensued, their belongings were scattered on the ground. Amongst the articles was the clock - and being a man of quick action - Lee picked it up and pretended to worship it. The Indians apparently saw nothing strange in this - so they spared him. But while he was keeping up his pretence, he was unable to do anything to help his friends for, with horrid yells and whoops the Indians danced round them carrying their tomahawks and their knives.

With horrified eyes Nelson Lee watched as having marched round the stakes once with their half-shuffle, half-run, two of the younger chiefs suddenly raised their knives and scalped the men, but took from the crowns of their heads pieces as big only as a five-shilling bit!

This did not cause death - it would have been better if it had - but it gave them intense pain, and the Indians fired by the sight of blood, set up their deadly whooping and marched round them again!

Nelson Lee averted his eyes - aghast at the horrible scene - and nearly beside himself with anguish at not being able to help the two unfortunate men - it would have been useless anyway.

The Indians had more terrible aims in view. Of the two hundred shrieking demons, not one did not carry in his hand a stone arrow head, sharpened to a keen edge and ripe for cutting.

As the two hundred passed the doomed men, they raised the arrow-heads and made light but long cuts on their naked bodies. They did this time and time again, until the bodies of the sufferers were mangled masses.

Until the evening in fact, was the horrid tragedy continued, the fiendish torturers sitting at intervals to smoke their pipes and watch the agonised movements of their mangled victims.

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I hasten to assure my fellow collectors and readers of O.B.B's - and perhaps before they delve into the pile of Nelson Lee

lore that has accumulated over the years - to find this particular story - that this was not the Nelson Lee detective as we know him!

He was, according to an extract from "The Editor to his Friends" and "Chums" (of all papers!) No. 17 Jan. 4th, 1893 - a New York farmer's son who was captured by the Comanche Indians and who saved his life amongst them only by an old alarm clock which he pretended to worship.

But while he was spared, two of his companions, Stewart and Martin, were horribly done to death before his eyes!

The Editor was repeating a story from "Ascott R. Hope's book "Stories of the Wild West". He states that - "It is so good a book that I refer to it again" and he stated the extract from one of the stories as I have already written down.

The Editor by the way carried on by saying:- "Here, however, is a true picture of Indian torture, which is thrilling enough to satisfy the keenest lover of the horrible".

I hope that as I put the extract from the story first, you will not think that I did it to mislead you purposely - it was to interest one and all in the coincidence of the famous name of Nelson Lee!

Still, it could have been! Sexton Blake got himself mixed up with Indians in the serial story, "The Redskin Detective"! This started in "The Dreadnought and War Pictorial" (Vol. 1, No.3. Oct. 10th, 1914) (New Series)

There is a good illustration to this story showing Blake standing defiant by the camp fire with a revolver in his hand and half a dozen Indians standing round with rifles pointing at him - and Tinker still sleeping peacefully on the ground by the fire!

SO! WHY NOT LEE?

\*\*\*\*\*  
Write Now, to T. Lambert, who probably has those books you require (and needs your duplicates) 25,000 Magazines in Stock. All types (1800 - 1950). Satisfaction Guaranteed. S.A.E. Please. 347, GERTRUDE ROAD, NORWICH.

LONDON CLUB LIBRARY requires Gems 742 and Magnets 1121 and 1439 to complete sets. ROGER JENKINS, 157 WESTERN AVENUE, LONDON, W.3.

LATE NEWS: Mr. J.M. Jukes of Bournemouth, following numerous enquiries, has succeeded in getting in touch with the old time author who had an unfortunate experience recently. We may have more news next month.

# OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

LONDON SECTION MEETING, JUNE 12th, 1955

Frank Richards and Carcroft, Arthur Gorfain and "The Silver Jacket", how these two were linked at the East Dulwich meeting was fully explained by the popular visitor from the Antipodes, the aforementioned Arthur Gorfain. He stated how the Carcroft School stories came to be published in the "Silver Jacket" and then gave a vivid account of his meeting with Frank Richards recently and followed this with a very descriptive account of his world wide wanderings, the latter including a visit to our esteemed Bill Gander of Transcona, Canada. A very welcome visitor was Arthur Gorfain and how the interested attendance enjoyed his talk. Latest copy to hand of the "Silver Jacket", the March issues, contains the first story in the barring out at Carcroft.

The Hamiltonian section of the library continues to do good business and the librarian, Roger Jenkins, announced a very good buy from Eric Fayne for the good of the library. Details of these additions will be found in the monthly newsheet. It was stated that the possibility of holding a meeting at Surbiton by kind invitation of Eric Fayne, date to be fixed later. Eric also hopes to attend one of the other meetings.

Two fine enjoyable competition quiz' were held, the compilers being the two winners of last month's efforts, Bill Lofts and Frank Vernon-Lay. Grand afternoon tea by the hosts, Len and Josie Packman, autographs for both Arthur Gorfain and the rest of the company present, friendly conversations and the usual sales and exchanges concluded a very fine meeting. Date of next meeting, Sunday, July 17th at Wood Green, London, N.22. 4 p.m. sharp.

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UNCLE BENJAMIN.

NORTHERN SECTION MEETING, JUNE 11th, 1955: Prior to the meeting, we had a visit from a columnist on the "Yorkshire Evening Post". He is writing a series of articles for his paper on the theme "Treasure from Leisure". Bill Williamson had suggested last month that we could provide him with some good copy. Gerry Allison wrote the journalist inviting him to a meeting, an invitation which was promptly accepted.

Quite a lot of notes were taken and a camera man also came along and took a couple of photographs. We are hoping to see a good story in the Y.E.P. about June 28th.

At the start of the meeting proper I, acting chairman, extended the sympathy of all present to Bill Harrison on the death of his mother at the great age of 86. After business had been disposed of

Gerry Allison read the second description of a thrilling cricket match. On this occasion it was taken from one of John Finnemore's stories of Slapton School, those grand yarns which appeared in the Boys Realm nigh on 50 years ago. It told of a famous House match between Jayne's and Barlow's. Once again it proved what grand material the great game provides when in the hands of an author who knows it intimately.

To wind up we had a word building quiz "Secondary Characters". It provided an exciting contest for Bill Williamson, Ron Hodgson, and Jack Wood tied for first place. The three then had a go on their own and Jack Wood won. Altogether a very enjoyable evening. Next Meeting, July 9th.

MERSEYSIDE SECTION MEETING - JUNE 12th: Considering that it was "Fleming June" there was quite a good attendance at this meeting, and things went with the usual swing. There's never a dull moment at Waterloo House. Incidentally, we would love to see some of you chaps of the other Sections any time you feel you would like to come. We can assure you of a very warm welcome - ask Herbert - and I know you would thoroughly enjoy the evening - so would we!

The highlights of the evening was Norman Pragnell's quiz. For a St. Frank's fan his questions on the Charles Hamilton schools were surprisingly cute, and far too difficult for most of us. It really was difficult, and quite the best quiz we have enjoyed for many a day. The winner was that youthful "veteran" of the Club, Peter Webster, and a very popular winner too, as he had to know his stuff to gain so many points. Talking of Peter, I often think how sad it is to realise how poverty-stricken the Club is for boys of Peter's age. I suppose its inevitable, under the circumstances, and another sign of this "Teddy-Boy" age. Next Meeting, Sunday, July 10th, 7 p.m.

FRANK UNWIN.

MIDLAND SECTION MEETING - MAY 25th: It is said that misfortunes do not come singly, and this gloomy doctrine was certainly exemplified this evening; as neither our Chairman nor our host, Mr. J.T. Handley, could be with us; in both cases due to unpreventable causes at very short notice. We were sorry to learn that our Chairman had had to go and join Mrs. Crobett who is convalescing at Eastbourne, and we sincerely hope that they will be with us quite fit and well for the next meeting.

The present meeting was our annual business meeting; so that after apologies had been made for the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Corbett, Mr. Handley, and also for that very keen and valued member, Mrs. W. Brown, who was on holiday, we began what was quite a fruitful and also enjoyable evening.

Many interesting suggestions were made during the evening. Among other things the pros and cons of such matters as a change of meeting night; establishment of a library; publicity; and holding a Christmas Dinner were discussed. Mr. Handley Junior, in his father's absence, ably acted as host during the evening.

EDWARD DAVEY.