

THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 114

JUNE, 1956

PRICE 1s. 6d.

Reproduction of the cover of No. 1 ALDINE "RED ROVER"
LIBRARY, OCT. 17th, 1933. Very scarce - only eight numbers issued.

TALES OF THE OLD SEA TIGERS.

No. 1.]

EACH NUMBER COMPLETE.

[Price 1d.



THE VENGEANCE OF BLACKBEARD.



Amid the shouts which acclaimed him chief young Blackbeard stood. Already the black flag was fluttering in the breeze, when Brodrick, springing forward, cutlass in hand, snarled, "Hold! I and I alone shall command the 'Revenge.'"

(A FACSIMILE OF THE COVER OF No. 1.)

BILL MARTIN

WORLD FAMOUS
FOR OLD BOYS' BOOKS.

93, HILLSIDE : LONDON N.W. 10.

'Phone: ELGar 3230

Cables: SUPERB USED, LONDON.

22 Different Copies of <u>Collectors Miscellany</u> . L.O.T. 20/-	Bound Volume <u>Chuckles</u> 235-260, 1918 Vintage. Price £3. 5. 0.
Bound Volume, <u>Magnets</u> , 1299-1350, £7. 10. 0. 52 copies.	Original <u>Green P. Populars</u> 1916, Nos. 146 - 165. Complete Run 50/-.
Bound Volume <u>U. Jacks</u> , 273 - 290, £3. 12. 0.	Various 1d, 1½d. 2d. <u>Populars</u> , 12 only. Price 24/-.
Vol. No. 1 <u>Girls' Friend Library</u> , 42/-.	<u>Boys' Cinema Annuals</u> 1948 and 1949, 2/6d. each.
Bound Vol. <u>Nicholas</u> , Vol. XXVII, Part 2, 1901. £1. 11. 6.	18 of the 1st 19 numbers of the <u>Sensational Library</u> . £3. 0. 0.
Bound Volume <u>Little Folks</u> (Cassells) £1. 11. 6.	Bound Volume <u>Magnets</u> 1351 - 1402, £7. 10. 0. 52 copies.
Complete Set 1931 - 1955 <u>U.S.A. Dime Novel Round Up</u> , 1 - 275. 3 missing. Best offer accepted	" <u>Bob Cherry's Barring Out</u> " 30/-
Bound Volume <u>Marvels</u> 65 - 78, Mint but No Covers. 21/- 440 Pages.	Bound Volume <u>Cheer Boys Cheer</u> , 18 - 68, Mint. 75/-

CASH WITH ORDER

POSTAGE EXTRA

The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 10 No. 114

Price 1s. 6d.

JUNE, 1956

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

From the Editor's Chair

A NOTEWORTHY EVENT. Gemites! has it occurred to you that on November 3rd next it will be just 50 years since the first St. Jim's story appeared on the bookstalls? It hadn't to me till the alert Percy North mentioned it. The story was the immortal Jack Blake of St. Jim's, and it appeared in the yellow-covered "Pluck", for the Gem of course hadn't then be born. Well, all will agree, Gemites or not, that we must fittingly mark the occasion in the November C. D. with articles appertaining to the famous school and it's host of characters who still live.

There's nothing like looking ahead, so get your wits to work, Gemites. Tell us how you first became acquainted with your favourite character and story and anything else you think will appeal. But don't let your pens run away with you, be crisp and get to the point so that I can give quite a number of you a share in an epic number.

THE ANNUAL. Owing to changes in the staff of our duplicating agency it is imperative that we should make an early start with the Annual this year. Remember it marks the end of a decade too, so we want to make it the best ever. You will be helping a **lot** if you can get down to your articles and deliver them as soon as ever possible.

INDEX VOL. 2. With this number you will find the very long overdue Vol. 2 Index. As I said last month I should be grateful if you would help towards cost. It would be about covered if each contributed stamps to the amount of 3d, two 1½d. ones would be convenient. If the response is favourable we could then get on with the other volumes, if Roger is willing that is, and can find the time.

Yours sincerely,
HERBERT LECKENBY.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

Thanks to our 'roving reporter' Bill Lofts, I am very pleased to announce another forthcoming 'scoop' for Blakiana. Bill has obtained first-hand information and data from and on a well-known and present day Blake author, all of which will appear very shortly in the pages of this section of the C.D.

The main feature for next month will be Eric Copeman's excellent full-length article "Turn Back the Clock". I feel sure that when you have read it you will all agree we must have more such work from the pen of our Australian chum.

I have been given a copy of a little magazine called "Crime Parade" containing an article on Sexton Blake. Some of the information is already known to practically all Blake devotees, but a number of interesting details are well worthy of reproduction. I am therefore preparing a number of extracts which will be published in Blakiana in the near future.

Finally, although I have enough material in hand to last for several months, I do look forward to your continued support in the form of articles for Blakiana. Time goes by very quickly, and the preparation and production of even this little section of the magazine requires quite a bit of planning well in advance - based on available material.

Oh yes, I almost forgot it... I wonder if Tinker would appreciate the 'pin-ups' adorning the covers of the latest issues of the S.B.L?

Josie Packman.

SEXTON BLAKE, MARKSMAN

by W.T. Thurbon.

It is pretty obvious that a man leading a life such as Sexton Blake led must be a dead shot, or else he would soon have been a dead detective. But not only was he a crack pistol shot - he was also a crack shot with the rifle; as witness particularly his travels with Lobangu.

Old Lobangu himself was a vile shot; but a safari that included Blake and Sir Richard Losely must have been pretty hot stuff to dress, and quite often they roped in another good shot for company - witness Jose the guide in "The Long Trail" and Trott the Mining Engineer in "The Golden Reef".

In a story at the beginning of the 1914-18 war Blake and the Hon. John Lawless (another good shot) came across a store of arms hidden by a German spy in an old tower in the Medway, and made some pretty practice with the Germans' own mausers against the spy and his compatriots.

Cecil Hayter's early Lobangu stories showed traces of Rider Haggard. Those Winchesters and Express rifles! In "U.J." No. 171 "The Slave Market" we read of Winchesters. In No. 206 "Sexton Blake, Whaler", Blake's party have with them two "Sixty Guinea Expresses and three Winchester Repeaters". In the course of the story they make their escape from the Whaler that has picked them up and take with them four Martinis from the ship's arms rack, since they lack ammunition for their own rifles. Hayter remained very faithful to the Winchester. In No. 404 "The Flying Column", "The Winchesters chattered and rippled". In No. 504, "The Long Trail", the guide Jose, carried a "Winchester repeater over the crook of his left arm". Later he is found using in this a "heavy .450 bullet with a long cartridge". And with this he did some pretty shooting. In this story Blake seems to have deserted his favourite Winchester for the long Lee-Enfield, for not only are Blake and Tinker both drawn with this rifle, but Lobangu also speaks of "my rifle that speaks ten times". In later stories the type of rifle is not specified, though in "The Treasure of Sonora" we find soldiers of a South American republic armed with old Manlicher rifles. In "U.J." No. 795 "The Moon of the East" (a story in which Sir Richard appears, but not Lobangu) we again find Blake and Losely armed with "Winchesters and Expresses". Incidentally, in No. 752 "The Golden Reef", Trott, the Mining Engineer, examines his rifle; "Then he tried the lock action a couple of times, easing down the hammer with his thumb." What was this rifle? - possibly a Winchester, since it had a hammer, but if so an old pattern. It could not have been an older Double Express, for Trott fires five shots "like a burst from a Lewis gun". This is a little problem to which I have so far found no solution.

When it came to hand-guns Blake (or Cecil Hayter) seems to prefer the Smith & Wesson. There are several references to this in

later stories.

Let us watch Sexton Blake in action:

In "Sexton Blake, Whaler", Blake tackles a bear that is raiding their stores. "Blake knelt down to get a better sight of him, steadies himself, and fired for the heart. There was a deep coughing grunt and bruin rolled over".

In "The Flying Column", there is a wonderful scene in which Blake, Tinker and Lobangu, acting as rearguard to their party, hold a narrow defile against their pursuers. "At the sight of the barricade the leading files checked, and an angry, but erratic storm of lead swept over the top of the boulders. 'Now' said Blake. The two Winchesters chattered and rippled, and the Askari front ranks melted away. Some were even shot down by their own men from behind; for with a native's usual unhandiness with firearms, they loosed off indiscriminately, heedless of their own leaders.

The dead and dying laid in thickly piles heaps, and the Winchesters grew heated; but still the Askari came on. Blake flung down his empty rifle and picked up one of the spare ones; two seconds later Tinker did the same. The attackers wavered under this new lead storm, and the heavy bullets did their work with an audible thud-phut. Then the wavering became a panic, and the Askari broke and fled.

'Load quick' continued Blake, 'this is only the beginning. They can afford to lose men, and next time they'll push the charge home'.

Working with feverish energy they jammed cartridges into the magazines, and tried to cool the barrels by laying them against the clammy rocks whenever there was a trickle of moisture....." There is a pause in the attack, then Tinker points out to Blake that one of the dead men outside has apparently moved closer: "Blake stared hard, fancying that some trick of the dim light had deceived him; and then beneath the dead man's body he caught sight of two glittering points - eyes. In a flash he understood. It was an old ruse. Relying on the uncertain light the Askari, using their dead as shields, were creeping up to get within striking distance. Blake took careful aim and fired, and the eyes disappeared".

It is a pity space precludes quoting the whole chapter. It is perhaps Hayter's greatest battle scene, and in all African adventure tales equalled perhaps only once or twice by the Master, Rider Haggard.

In "The Long Trail" there is much pretty shooting, notably by Jose the guide with his Winchester. But in one scene we find

Blake's marksmanship at its peak. The camp of the party in the Amazonian forests is attacked by tree men armed with poisoned darts. Blake has built shelters for his bearers, but the cunning tree men have found a weak place in the roof of one hut and broken it by dropping logs. As the scared bearers seek to escape from the wreckage, the tree men trap them from above with tough liana ropes:

"There were as many as ten or eleven dangling in the air at one time, caught in various fashions.....

'By the Lord Harry' roared Sir Richard, 'I can't stand this', and blazed at the leafy canopy wherever he saw a chance. It was here that Jose's marvellous shooting, and Blake's came into play. While Tinker and Sir Richard kept up a hot fire at the men above, they concentrated their attention on those swinging, straining lianas - a tricky mark in such a light - a long, dangling, jerking rope of tough fibre, no more than an inch in diameter, and always on the move. Five men they rescued in this way, before they had been hauled up far enough to be seriously hurt by the fall. A sixth - came down with no worse damage than a snapped collar bone".

One last glimpse at Sexton Blake, Marksman, as Cecil Hayter saw him. "The Golden Reef":

"---at each landing one of them - generally Blake - stopped to make 'look see'. Once he caught sight of moving figures on the edge of the grasses and emptied a magazine of cartridges on chance. Two of them, at any rate, found their mark, for one man leapt high out of the grass, and gave a yell which reached them like a faint whine, before he crumpled up. The other just bent forward on his knees --- and then slithered forward with his nose in the ooze and lay still. The bullet had caught him through the head. 'That's pretty shooting' said Trott, who had been squinting over Blake's shoulder."

An early "U.J." tale was "Sexton Blake, Territorial". What a pity, at least so far as I know, that no one ever gave us "Sexton Blake at Bisley". There's an idea there for the A. Press; they might produce at the appropriate time a topical, and readable, S.B.Lib.

WELCOME PETER SAXON

by Eric Copeman.

SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY No. 353 (Third Series) has made history. Or is that only my humble opinion? Issued in February 1956, first and foremost its cover is both striking and revolutionary, and I can

imagine many of the devoted "old-timers" shaking their heads sadly and saying "Blake's slipping badly, poor old soul!" And that just because the glamorous Teresa Benato and her flame-coloured dress was used by the publishers as a "drawcard" on the bookstalls!

Well, all I can say is that I hope she bewitched the lot of browsers into buying themselves a copy.

For S.B.L. No. 353 is written by Peter Saxon and, to the best of my knowledge, it is his first Blake yarn. It's title is DANGER AHEAD, and there certainly is plenty of that, and all the thrills and suspense you could desire, and all told in a taut, tense, compelling style that makes you want to read on into the next chapter.

When I finished reading the story, I confess, though, that I was disappointed.

Yes, I was disappointed that I didn't possess yet another Peter Saxon yarn of Blake that I could pick up and read immediately.

In case old-timers might think I am merely speaking for the newer generation in lauding this particular yarn, let me confess that I knew Blake when he battled with Zenith and Plummer and Rymer and Wu Ling; when he had hectic adventures with Waldo and Ruff Hanson and Splash Page; when he travelled to odd corners of the globe with Purvale, and when he matched his wits against Ferraro, Leon Kestrel, Paul Cynos, Satira and the Confederation. Grand times, admittedly, but past.

Blake battles today with criminals who operate maybe on a smaller scale (in this case concerning the sabotaging of the mining of cobalt, a key mineral in this atomic age). But - and here is the point- these days Blake fights his battles to a finish and justice is done. Plummer, Rymer, etc. may have been charming as well as unscrupulous but they defied the law, and, loath as we are to confess it, Blake never finally managed to bring many of them to book! Today he has few failures. (And isn't it a failure when the criminal gets away? Be honest, now. Isn't it?)

Which brings me back to Peter Saxon's DANGER AHEAD. I recommend this story to anyone who wants to meet Blake the man of action Blake the man of grit and determination.

Set in Portuguese West Africa it carries an air of authenticity and the characters of Enrico Oliveira, Chief of the Cabinda Branch of the Portuguese Security Service, his secretary the glamorous Rita Carreras, the huge and villainous Serilla, six feet nine tall, who nearly breaks Blake's back by sheer brute strength, and Cunha, the ape-like dwarf at the house of intrigue in Loanda, where also

Blake meets the beautiful Teresa so ably depicted in the cover illustration --- all of these characters are extremely well-drawn.

I don't know who Peter Saxon is, but I do say this: If he can continue writing Blake stories of the high standard of DANGER AHEAD, I believe that in 1956 the popularity of the Man from Baker Street will climb once more and new followers of his exploits will be found.

My one fear is that this one brilliant story should be Peter Saxon's lone contribution to the Blake Saga, and that, now that it has been published, it's author should not be heard of in our Circle again.

It happened some years ago with author Richard Standish who turned out an excellent yarn, THE CASE OF SGT. BILL MORDEEN (S.B.L. No. 85, year 1944). And it has happened with others.

It musn't happen with Peter Saxon.

(Note. This article was written and sent from Australia in March. Another yarn by Peter Saxon has now been published (S.B.L. No. 358 "Decoy for Murder"), and one of the June numbers will be by this author, entitled "Flight into Fear". I agree with Mr. Copeman that Peter Saxon's first story is quite good, but I have an idea he is going to be very disappointed when he reads No. 358, for Tinker does not appear at all; in fact it is my opinion that this story was written as an ordinary detective yarn suitable for any paper wherein the name of any detective could be used - unfortunately, it had to be Blake!)

Josie Packman.

In "The Devil's Can Can" by W. Howard Baker, Sexton Blake is making an introduction. Says he:

"My assistant, Edward Carter, but everybody calls him Tinker; only they know why".

Well, well, after all these years. Blake fans should march to Fleetway House in protest.

Wise-crack from Lawrence Morley - "It's the SEXton Blake Library now".

SCHOOL FRIEND WEEKLY. Wanted, any issues for 1919, 1920 and 1921 only. Oddments or runs welcomed. L. Packman, 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London S.E.22.

"COMICS" CORNERGOODBYE "RAINBOW"

by W.O.G. Lofts

If one excepts CHICK'S OWN and TINY TOTS which - apart from not being of the same vintage - are only for the 'toddlers', the last of the comic papers of our childhood days has finished.

When I bought the RAINBOW a few weeks ago for my nephew, I saw written on the front page "Don't miss the exciting news on page 6"; this was to the effect that as from the following week the RAINBOW would be amalgamated with TINY TOTS.

The RAINBOW first saw the light of day on 14 February 1914, and right from the very beginning the famous characters "The Bruin Boys" appeared on the front page. These characters were originated by an artist named H. Foxwell, who handed them over to another artist when he left the A. Press to draw the well-known Daily Mail cartoon "Teddy Tail".

When I was young, how I - like many others of us - enjoyed the antics of the Bruin Boys: Tiger Tim, Bobby Bruin, Joey the parrot, Jacko the monkey, Willie the Ostrich, Fido the dog, Georgie the giraffe, and occasionally Piggy Forker and Percy the pelican, not forgetting the lovable Mrs. Bruin.

Other characters, too, were in the RAINBOW almost from the beginning to the end, such as Susie Sunshine (originally Susie and her Pet Poms), Marzipan the Magician, The Two Pickles and The Brownie Boys. There was also a story featuring a little girl, Bonny Bluebell, each week. Like Peter Pan, Bonny Bluebell was still a little girl in the very last number. The Two Pickles, The Brownie Boys, Susie Sunshine and the Bruin Boys appear at the moment in TINY TOTS AND RAINBOW, but I regret to say we have seen the last of Bonny Bluebell - Bless her!

It is, of course, the Bruin Boys that one always associated with the RAINBOW. In the early days these characters became so popular that on 19 July the A.P. brought out another paper featuring them - TIGER TIM'S TALES, but in story form instead of cartoon. This was a small, oblong-shaped paper which also contained a school story. In this format, however, the paper only ran for 28 issues and was then enlarged to twice the size (with half the number of pages) and re-named TIGER TIM'S WEEKLY. After a run of 94 issues a new series commenced, No. 1 being dated 19 November 1921. This series enjoyed

a long run of 965 issues, concluding 18 May 1940. Tiger Tim and the Bruin Boys did, of course, appear later in that paper in cartoon form.

At one time the RAINBOW was intended for the 7 to 14 age group, but during the last year or so it has become very much another 'toddler's' paper. The comparison between a copy for, say the year 1951 and the last number, is synonymous with the proverbial chalk and cheese.

Nevertheless, the RAINBOW (and the Bruin Boys) as such, was a link with our childhood, and for that reason its demise will be sadly lamented.

For the record, the details are as follows:

RAINBOW	No. 1 dated 14.2.1914, No.1898 dated 28.4.1956.
TIGER TIM'S TALES	No. 1 dated 19.7.1919, No. 28 dated 24.1.1920.
TIGER TIM'S WEEKLY	No. 1 dated 31.1.1920, No. 94 dated 12.11.1921.
TIGER TIM'S WEEKLY (new series)	No. 1 dated 19.11.1921, No. 965 dated 18.5.1940.

GEMS. GEMS. GEMS. GEMS. GEMS.

Any collector who wishes to dispose of the undermentioned numbers will find me ready to discuss a price that would be favourable to himself.

~~463-462-444-497-453-460-454-499-507-587-502-521-529-570-~~

No larks or anonymous postcards please, just straightforward dealing all along the line. J.L. JUKES, Stafford Lodge, Crosby Rd., Westbourne, Bournemouth.

SALE OR EXCHANGE: CHATTERBOX ANNUAL (N.D.); N.LEES; HOLIDAY ANNUALS; SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN AND S.O.L's (some early); UNION JACKS; OTHER ODDMENTS. ALSO 9 Vols. early "STRANDS" (Vol. 3 on). C.D.'s. Vols. 4,5,6,7,8,9. Also Nos. 35,36,109,111-113. ANNUALS 1952, 1953, 1954.

No reasonable offer refused. L. ASHLEY, 23, Mountjoy, Bridport, Dorset.

URGENT. Many Sexton Blake Libs. wanted (1st and 2nd series) complete with covers. Serial numbers, series and price please. Also any Union Jacks in good condition for the years 1917,1918. JOSIE PACKMAN, 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London S.E.22.

HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by Herbert Leckenby

THOSE 'GREYFRIARS' LETTERS

THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED! Yes, you fellows, the mysterious "Mr. Quelch" has been unmasked, and his identity will come as a big surprise and a real good story. We revel in mysteries in fiction form; well here's one, in fact a real whodunit. I'm sure you will agree when I tell you.

Everyone was under the impression, naturally, that the writer was a Londoner or less likely, someone in the provinces who had a confederate in London to post the letters for him; but it was neither of these, it was someone far across the seas - **LESLIE ROWLEY, BRITISH EMBASSY, TOKYO, JAPAN!!** I think I'll have to call the story "Tracked across the Seas", or "From Clue to Clue".

I really got my first clue quite by accident. One day I resolved to start sifting up piles of letters which had accumulated these past few months. Among them I came across a foolscap envelope with Leslie Rowley's handwriting. With it had come a letter typewritten. I spotted something I hadn't noticed at the time I had received it - it had been posted in London. Now some months ago Ben Whiter had told me that you could send letters to Leslie via the Foreign Office, but I had never thought of that when I was studying the Greyfriars' letters. But what now caught my eye was that not only had Leslie's letter been posted in London but that the post-mark said S.W.1, the district where all those Greyfriars' letters had been posted. Said I to myself - 'Now I wonder, I wonder; Leslie Rowley! well from what I've seen he would certainly have the ability to compile those letters'. I set about investigating further. It so happened that I had lent someone the letters but I found the envelope of one from "Mr. Quelch"; I compared the typing with a letter and article from Leslie, "Strewth!" I exclaimed, "the same type of machine, if not the identical one." Then when I saw that the 'e' was in several places slightly out of alignment on each document I got more and more confident that I was on the track at last. A day or two later I got all the letters back. I placed those from Quelch alongside those direct from Leslie to me. Yes,

my word: there was that tell-tale 'e' again and again, and then other little signs. I noticed something else; one of the letters was dated a day later than that on which it was posted. That could have been just an error, on the other hand, Leslie in Tokyo, might have tried to calculate on which day it would be posted in London for him, and been one day out.

Then I turned to the handwritten letters from Vernon-Smith, Bunter, Fisher T. Fish & Co. Um! the loops in the capital letters were different; that's easy to do, but there were places on which I was sure a handwriting expert would place his finger and produce as evidence.

Eventually, I got my best clue of all. I turned up another letter from Leslie. It was on cream coloured foolscap, with a crest and the Embassy address at the top. I compared with Vernon-Smith's. It was on the same sort of paper just a little shorter because the heading had been cut off! "Leslie" I exclaimed to myself "you are the man!"

Off went an air-letter to Tokyo placing before Leslie all the 'evidence'. A few days later came a letter from Leslie. It wasn't a reply to mine, there hadn't been time for that. This is what he said.

British Embassy,
Tokyo,
Japan.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

The March "C.D." has just reached me and I am writing to (a) reveal myself as the originator of the "Greyfriars' Letters" sent under this and less elegant headings and (b) to say how pleased I am that the little deception caused the Leeds members some amusement.

Now as to your deductions. The letters were typed or written by me at home (and not the office!!) in Tokyo. I used my own two typewriters, despite the possession of which I am a clumsy amateur typist. The letters then travelled by our diplomatic bag to London where they were posted by the Foreign Office. They were post-dated to adjust the time-lag from here to London.

You may well ask what prompted me to embark on all this. In the first place I was envious of the expertise of others, e.g. Roger Jenkins and Bill Lofts. Secondly, as a London member I thought it would be in the nature of a little rag on

Leeds! and lastly I wanted to see if a mere beginner like myself could "have a go" with those leaders of "the brotherhood" - folk like yourself.

The result of all this is that you have been very kind to me and I shall treasure your remarks made in the "C.D." March issue.

Yours sincerely,

LES. ROWLEY.

Well, I was jolly glad our letters had crossed. Leslie had "confessed" frankly and voluntarily and I had the satisfaction of proving to him that I had forestalled him.

A few days later came another letter. I'll quote:-

"Your letter of May 7th crossed with mine so you know just how correct you were in your deductions. Congratulations. You win! I never imagined my letters would initiate such industry and perception".

Well, the file on "The Mystery of the Greyfriars' Letters" is nearly tied up. The case with a happy ending.

(Note: This article has already appeared in Mike Moorcock's enterprising little Book Collectors' News, but it was thought worthy of the wider circulation the Collectors' Digest is able to give it.

H.L.)

CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL

by Leonard Packman.

In the month of May 1919, at which time I was nearing my fourteenth birthday, I was already an avid reader of the 'Magnet' and 'Gem' and other publications featuring Hamiltonian stories. This particular date, however, is more than a memory, for it marked my introduction to stories of Cliff House School.

On 17 May 1919 the 'School Friend' made its first appearance, and a more appealing cover could not have been devised. In size and format the paper was the counterpart of the 'Magnet', the cover being a blue design on a white background, as was the 'Magnet' at that time. The illustration depicted Bessie Bunter holding a cage containing her parrot, and the title of the story, appropriately enough, was 'The Girls of Cliff House'.

This paper, with the first story introducing so many delightful

characters, attracted me greatly. The reason for this is somewhat difficult to define, but the probability is that adolescence and the consequent attraction of the opposite sex had something to do with it. The fact remains that week by week I became more interested in the adventures of the Cliff House girls than those of the Greyfriars and St. Jim's boys. They really were delightful stories, and seeing that Charles Hamilton was the original creator of the school and the central characters, it goes without saying that each and every one of the latter had her own well-defined personality. For example: Clara Trevelyn, a boisterous tomboy; Marjorie Hazeldene, thoughtful, kind-hearted and peace-loving; Barbara Redfern, spirited and yet an ideal 'skipper'; Bessie Bunter, a replica of her brother Billy, even to being a ventriloquist.

It is true that after the first half dozen or so numbers of the 'School Friend' the original 'Hilda Richards' ceased to write the stories, but by that time the characters were already my friends. Furthermore, I had not reached the age of discernment, so that the fact of the subsequent stories being written by substitute writers such as Roseman, Wheway and Samways meant little or nothing to me.

Yes, I must confess that this paper, featuring the delightful adventures of the Cliff House girls attracted me more than any other juvenile publication at that time - with one exception, the name of which, as Mr. Richards would say, it would be interesting not to reveal - and continued to do so for a very long time.

A few of those early titles are self-explanatory as to the variety of subjects around which the stories were woven: 'The Cliff House Ventriloquist', 'The Fourth Form Magazine', 'The Cliff House Pet Club', 'The Cliff House Camera Craze', 'Rival Concert Parties', 'Sports Day at Cliff House', 'The Cliff House Cooks', 'Only a Scholarship Girl', 'The Cliff House Girl Guides', 'The Cliff House Cricketers', 'Cliff House in Camp', 'Bessie Bunter in Love', 'The Cliff House Secret Society', 'The Mystery of the Election', and many others, each and every one a delight to read.

Neither must I forget the artist, G. M. Dodshon, whose illustrations of the girls had to my mind, the same characterisation as Warwick Reynolds gave the boys of St. Jim's, and C. H. Chapman the boys of Greyfriars.

With the passing of the next few years, I never deviated from my staunch adherence to the 'School Friend'. Then, in 1926 (dated for 1927) to my great delight came the 'School Friend Annual'. My

be very sorry indeed to learn of the passing away of Mrs. Herbert Leckenby last night, 4th June, 1926. At this very late moment, the publishers thought that readers will

only regret at that time (and now, for that matter) being that there were not more stories by 'Hilda Richards' in the 'S. F. Annual' than there actually were. nevertheless, it was beautifully produced with coloured and photogravure plates, stories, and articles (galore) featuring Cliff House School. Thanks to Mike Moorcock, I am the proud possessor of a copy of the first 'School Friend Annual' - in mint condition - and I have just finished reading it with as much pleasure as I did those many years ago, albeit with feelings which those of us who are 'getting on' can understand.

About a year ago I obtained (through an advertisement in the Exchange & Mart) a copy of No. 1 of the 'School Friend', but I let a Northern collector (who has been more than a friend to myself and family) have it, and I know that he cherishes it.

I should like to obtain more of the early 'Annuals', and if any reader can supply any from 1928 to 1935 I will pay a good price, especially for 1928 to 1930.

In later years this Annual changed its size and style, but it still retained its attraction even as late as 1939. (I have copies from 1936 to 1939.)

With the appearance of the 'Schoolgirl's Own Library' my pleasure was still further added to, for many of the numbers featured Cliff House School (and Morcove School, an article on which may appear later in this magazine). In its early days the S.O.L. had a yellow cover, and in recent years I have found it far more difficult to obtain these (featuring Cliff House) than I have the 'Schoolboy's Own Library'.

For those who remember the 'School Friend', 'School Friend Annual' and 'Schoolgirl's Own Library', here are some of the central characters in the early years. They may also interest the younger reader; some of the surnames will at least 'ring a bell' if they have read stories of Greyfriars School.

STAFF. Miss Penelope Primrose (Headmistress); Miss T. A. Bland (5th Form); Miss V. Steel (4th Form); Miss M. E. Bullivant (Upper 3rd Form, and Second in Command); Miss N. Chantry (Music Mistress); Middle. Gabrielle Lupin (French Mistress). Ephraim Pennyfarthing (Cliff House Gardener); Piper (Porter); Mrs. Green and Miss Pickles (Cooks); Mrs. Towle (Matron); Mrs. Jones (Tuckshop Proprietress).

SCHOLARS. 6th Form: Stella Stone (Captain of the School); Connie Jackson; Frances Barrett. 5th Form: Grace Woodfield; Flora Cann; Angelica Jelly; Florence Ellison; Delia Corbyn.

4th Form: Barbara Redfern; Mabel Lynn; Clara Trevelyn; Marcia Loftus; Nancy Bell; Dolly Jobling; Katie Smith; Bessie Bunter (Elizabeth Gertrude Bunter); Vivienne Leigh; Freda Foote; Bridget O'Toole; Augusta Anstruther-Browne; Marjorie Hazeldene; Phyllis Howell; Cissy Clare; Gwen Cook; Phillipa Derwent (a John Nix Pentelow character, originally introduced with her brother Phillip as 'The Twins from Tasmania'. This was in a serial at the back of the 'Gem', and they were known as 'Flip' and 'Flap' Derwent.); Annabel Hichens; Jemima Carstairs and Peggy Preston. Another of Pentelow's characters, by the way, was Phyllis Howell. Upper 3rd Form: Alice Constable. 3rd Form: Madge Stevens; Doris Redfern. 2nd Form: Beatrice Barlow; 'Teddy' Bear.

I could make this article very lengthy, but it may well be that I am one of few in my enthusiasm for Cliff House School. And so, in conclusion, I will say: thank you, 'Hilda Richards' for creating such a delightful school and such lovable characters.

(Note. Since writing this article I have obtained a mint copy of the 'School Friend Annual' for the year 1929).

DO YOU REMEMBER?

By Roger M. Jenkins

No. 17 - Magnet No. 846 - "Too Clever of Skinner"

The measure of Charles Hamilton's success in character drawing may be judged by his presentations of the bad characters. It is easy to depict a hero without faults and a villain with no redeeming features, but it is in between these two extremes that the vast mass of humanity falls - neither black nor white but varying shades of grey. Among the darker hues lie characters like Cardew and Vernon-Smith: they are not meant to be heroes, but they are presented with a degree of understanding that inevitably leads us to regard them with some affection, and it is the convincing portrayal of such characters as these which sets the author above the common run of story-tellers, for he is more interested in people than in events. Even more successful than Cardew and Vernon-Smith, however, was the way in which Charles Hamilton depicted Harold Skinner, without doubt one of the most unpleasant members of the Greyfriars Remove.

No trick was too base for Skinner, and no devious path would he eschew in order to gain his ends. He was inspired by a spirit of contrariness, a desire to set his form-fellows at odds with one another. His engaging disposition enabled him to derive considerable enjoyment from the misfortunes of his friends. A bad hat with

a weak and vicious nature, he might well have been nothing more than a stock villain but for the magic touch which Charles Hamilton employed to bring him to life - his sense of humour.

Let it be said at once that Skinner's sense of humour never led him to see a joke against himself - that would not have been true to a nature such as his. Nevertheless, some of his exchanges with Bunter are often extremely witty, and he voiced numerous amusing criticisms of the Famous Five which contained a germ of truth, like his dubbing Wharton "the great Panjandrum of the Remove".

Magnet No. 846 began on a glorious summer afternoon in 1924, with a trip up the river Sark. The Famous Five were out for a pull up the river, as were Skinner and Snoop. Skinner was on top of his form in banter when he began by telling them that "the consciousness of virtue is its own reward", and kept up the standard all the way until the end when he reminded them not to forget their tracts.

The story revolved around some sovereigns which Skinner acquired from a shady character, and which he was selling at 25/- each; sovereigns were not quite the rarity they later became, and it was then illegal to sell them at more than their face value. Wharton pointed this out to Skinner, whose rejoinder was the typically ironic "Dear me!" The tale continued with many surprising twists and turns (including a lecture on Gresham's law of economics by Newland) until Skinner was fairly caught up in the toils of his own contriving, and escaped serious trouble only with the help of the Famous Five.

In the stories in which Skinner appeared in the main role, it was inevitable that his plottings should come to nothing and that virtue should triumph. Nevertheless, it is possible to entertain a sneaking affection for Skinner, and it seems reasonably certain that this feeling was shared by Charles Hamilton, who must have greatly enjoyed depicting such an ironic and wry mannered character. Magnet No. 846 was a typical product of its age, and our enjoyment of the story is rounded off by C. H. Chapman's most apt illustrations of the crafty, thin-lipped and sharp-featured Skinner. Long may this perverse junior continue to amuse us with his sardonic and unkind witticisms.

Concluded on Page 163.

FOR SALE C. D. Annuals, 1951/2/3/4; C.D.'s 46-113. Offers to
W. HARRISON, 54, Chandos Avenue, Leeds 8.

Note: Here is something new by versatile Eric Fayne.

"Collectors' Digest" POINTERS No. 1.

R	A	W	E	I	R
L	Y	Y	L	B	C
E	C	A	M	A	H
D	N	O	R	R	D
F	I	F	O	D	S
H	S	F	I	L	C

Start with any letter and moving from that square to any adjacent square, horizontally, vertically or diagonally spell out the longest word you can find. Make a note of the word, and, in the squares, cross out the letters you have used. Now look for another word, and continue until there are no more words to be found. It is not necessary to use all the letters.

Score:- two-letter word, 1 point; for a three-letter word, 3 points four-letters, 5 points; five-letters, 7 points; six-letters, 9 points. And so on, adding two points for each additional letter. NAMES OF PEOPLE, PLACES, or CHARACTERS connected with the hobby count double points.

Write your words on a postcard, with the score you claim, and post it to the Editor. A 5/- postal-order will be sent for the best effort. Don't forget to include your name and address.

Nelson Lee Column

by JACK WOOD,
NOSTAW, 328 Stockton Lane,
YORK.



One of the Edwy Searles Brooks's most interesting characters, I always found, was Cecil De Valerie, who created quite a stir on his arrival at St. Frank's and then dropped into semi-oblivion, from which he later emerged on at least two occasions to

become a temporary captain of the Remove. One sees in him, maybe, the germ of the Reggie Pitt of the future. However, here is Bernard Thorne, our Toronto correspondent, with another of his penetrating character studies.

ST. FRANK'S CHARACTERS — CECIL DE VALERIE

Cecil De Valerie, of Study M in the Ancient House, was another of Brook's Bad Boys who succeeded in living down his past.

Rather slim for his age, of elegant - almost aristocratic - bearing, he was cool and completely self-possessed. Edwy Searles Brooks describes him as being 5ft. 3 ins. in height, weight 8st. 4lb. with black hair, worn long and brushed back from almost Byronic features. He had piercingly dark eyes and perfect white teeth.

He first arrived at St. Frank's in the new year of 1918, and, thanks to his objectionable ways, was immediately dubbed "The Rotter". Not that this caused De Valerie any sleeplessness. He was indifferent to the opinion of others, and preferred his own company, even to that of the Nuts-Fullwood, Gulliver and Bell. But the arrival of Tom Burton, known as the Bosun, brought Cecil to their camp, for he took a dislike to the bargemaster's son at first sight, and almost immediately enlisted Fullwood's aid in concocting a scheme that would bring the new boy into disrepute. Happily, Nipper was able to foil the plan in time, but this did not cure De Valerie of his penchant for ill-natured plotting. However, it was this weakness that finally brought about his change of heart.

In Old Series No. 140, De Valerie, lounging around the Paddock, met a young boy named Binnson who was delivering some films from Bannington for the use of the Ancient House Cinema. He followed Binnson to the loft above the stables with the intention of destroying the films. But Binnson refused to surrender them; in a fit of rage De Valerie knocked the boy down and locked him in the loft out of spite. A small enough beginning to an incident that would change De Valerie's life! He left the loft, lighting a cigarette as he went. With utter carelessness he threw the still-burning match away - it fell among some bales of hay! The building was razed to the ground and De Valerie believed that Binnson had been trapped and burnt to death. Luckily, the boy had escaped through a rear door, and in company with a scoundrel named Bradmore plotted to blackmail De Valerie. The junior, told by Bradmore that Binnson's death would probably lead to a charge of murder, was an easy victim. Almost ill with worry the wretched junior was noticed by Nelson Lee who quietly

went to work to unravel the mystery. When at last he had possession of all the facts the detective schoolmaster confronted De Valerie with his sins. The junior confessed, and, on learning that Binson was alive and unharmed, was overwhelmed with contrition. Bradmore and Binson received their just deserts; De Valerie, all the better for his terrible lesson, was put on trust to mend his ways.

From then on De Valerie began to change, although the change was gradual and not without some backsliding. In fact, it was as the result of one such lapse that Montie Tregellis-West, the victim of mistaken identity, faced a public flogging. De Valerie had visited the Bannington races where he had been seen by Mr. Crowell. The Form-master had not been close enough to identify De Valerie, but he had perceived that the boy wore a fancy waistcoat and a St. Frank's cap. Unfortunately, on returning to the school, the first boy to confront Mr. Crowell was Montie, resplendent in a fancy waistcoat not unlike that worn by De Valerie. This coincidence, coupled with others, was sufficient to convict Tregellis-West. Nipper had approached De Valerie and demanded that he confess to the Head. But, unbeknown to the Junior Captain, Cecil had already done so, and he derived considerable amusement from Nipper's efforts to persuade him to take a step that he had already taken!

"You howling rotter!" Nipper shouted, exasperated by De Valerie's coolness. 'Are you going to own up or not? Yes or no?'

'As they say in the House of Commons, the reply is in the negative,' De Valerie smiles. 'In plain good English - no!'

'You'll have yourself to blame for what happens then.' Nipper said furiously.

'You're going to sneak, what?'

'No, I'm not going to sneak,' roared Nipper angrily. 'It is not sneaking to expose a scoundrelly rotter. I'm going to save Tregellis-West. Is that clear?'

'Painfully clear, old man!'

'Don't you call me 'old man'-----'

'Sorry,' De Valerie replied. He was completely self-possessed and at his ease. 'I meant 'young man'. Don't burst a blood vessel, will you? It wouldn't do you any good, you know!'

Nipper realised the futility of losing his temper; and, by sheer willpower, compelled himself to keep calm.

'You're a queer chap,' he said. 'And in some ways, I admire you. Hang it all, there's plenty of decency in you. Why can't you do the right thing?'

'That's what I am doin'.'

'For the last time, will you go to the Head and confess?'

'No, old bean! I'm afraid I won't!' De Valerie replied languidly.

'I'll show you up before the whole school!'

'That'll be excitin', won't it?'

Nipper glared at him, at a loss for words.

'So the little argument is finished, what?' drawled De Valerie, and rose to his feet. 'I dislike havin' rows with you, Nipper.

You're a decent chap, an' I like you. You've such a polite way of speakin', you know. You won't stand any nonsense, eh?'

'I shall give you away, you sneering rotter!' Nipper shouted hotly.

De Valerie opened the door.

'My dear chap, do just what you like. Don't mind me, you know. I don't count. Just please yourself - you can be certain that I shall approve.'

His coolness was too much for the exasperated Nipper who watched his stroll down the passage, completely at his ease.

This then was Cecil De Valerie - the fellow who could make even Nipper lost his equanimity, while remaining himself, cool and unruffled. In the Cecil De Valerie of 1918 we obtain a clear vision of the Vivian Travers of 1928. Let us travel through time to First New Series No. 91, and listen to Nipper waxing eloquently on the subject of one - Vivian Travers:

'You're a disgrace to the House, Travers!' shouted Nipper angrily. 'It's bad enough to gamble in your own study and in the bedroom with your own pals; but when you invite these East House Seniors, its nothing but a disgrace!'

'We all have our own points of view,' drawled Travers, yawning.

'You'll crack up if you keep up this pace.'

Travers shrugged carelessly. He was in no way perturbed.

'Thank you for those kind words, dear old fellow!' he said coolly."

De Valerie soon lost his unsavoury reputation and his sobriquet of 'The Rotter', and became one of Nipper's most stalwart supporters. When the Hon. Douglas Singleton started his rival school in Bannington, De Valerie, although tempted by the prospect of freedom from learning and the gambling and smoking sessions that school offered, stood firm. When a party of selected juniors left for

for Brazil under Lord Dorriemore, Cecil De Valerie was among them. When Sir Gregory Tweed's giant airship left on its ill-fated flight over Southern England, De Valerie was one of those selected to make the flight. When a party of St. Frank's juniors were invited to a ranch in Montana, U.S.A., De Valerie was again on the list of invitations.

His popularity among his fellow members of the Junior School was enhanced by his prowess at sports. A regular member of the Junior Eleven, he was one of its best bowlers and a reliable bat. His skill at Soccer earned him an almost permanent place in the forward line. As a long distance runner he was equalled only by Nipper, Oldfield, Reggie Pitt, and Bob Christine.

Edwy Searles Brooks devoted a number of tales almost exclusively to Cecil De Valerie; one that we believe to be among his best was entitled "The Demon Within Him." Here we see De Valerie reverting to his old unpleasant self - but with a difference! His suave, self-assured exterior has gone; and in its place we see a De Valerie with a quick and unmanageable temper - with every iota of coolness and decency replaced with rudeness and callous indifference to others.

It all started as a result of an argument with his study-mate, the Duke of Somerton, over the admittance of Jerry Dodds into their study. Following this De Valerie was approached by Nipper and Reggie Pitt for a donation to a fund they were promoting to aid an old villager named Griggs, who due to ill health and unemployment was in straitened circumstances. He refused point-blank to assist and ordered them out of the study. Finally he was unspeakably rude to his Uncle Dan and Cousin Mary who called on him that afternoon. His young and charming cousin hoped that he would assist her to learn skating. But De Valerie, now in the grip of an evil temper, had no desire for her company, or that of any other. Ridding himself unceremoniously of his visitors, he locked the study door and sat down to brood and indulge in self-pity. Finally, in the worst possible mood, he stormed out of the Ancient House and started on a ramble along the snow-covered country lanes.

And while trudging bitterly through the snow the result of his shocking behaviour caught up with him. First he met the down-and-out carrier Griggs staggering through the snow in a last effort to earn a little money to save his family from starvation. But Griggs was even at that moment dying with pneumonia, and as De Valerie reached him he fell unconscious in the snow. De Valerie did all

that he could, but the old man died in his arms. Dr. Brett, who was passing, took charge, and De Valerie - overcome with remorse - trudged blindly on through the winter afternoon.

Some quirk of fate turned his footsteps in the direction of the River Stowe. The road ran along an embankment at some height above the river, and he gazed vacantly at the frozen surface as he walked. Suddenly, a shrill scream sounded. Near the middle of the river a dark hole showed where the ice had broken, and as Cecil gazed, a girl's head and shoulders appeared out of the dark waters - a girl who he immediately recognised as his cousin Mary. In a split second he realised that he was the direct cause of her predicament for, deprived of his assistance, Mary had gone skating alone; ignorant of the treacherous surface of the ice, she had plunged through into the deep water.

Almost sobbing with remorse and anxiety, he rushed along the road to find a place where he could descend to the river bank. Some minutes passed before he reached the surface of the ice; but he was too late, a party of juniors, who had been skating nearby, were already on the spot. Quickly they wrapped the girl in their coats and carried her to the bank. But as minutes passed, and all their efforts to revive her failed, the truth burst upon the stunned De Valerie.

"Oh, I know it! She's dead!"

He shuddered with the agony of his remorse. First poor Griggs, who would be alive but for his selfishness; and now his cousin--!

A voice broke into his thoughts.

"It's no good, you fellows! It's no good!"

"Is she - is she gone?"

"Y-yes!"

"Oh, good heavens!"

De Valerie gave a wild, despairing cry, and sank to the ground sobbing convulsively.

"She is dead - Mary! Oh, what have I done?"

Blindly he stumbled to his feet and rushed madly across the ice. And then it happened! There was a cracking and crumbling around him, and with a wild cry he was thrown headlong into the icy depths. He felt himself going down - down! As that last grim struggle began, and his consciousness ebbed, he knew that it was the end-----.

But, of course, it wasn't! For Cecil De Valerie came to himself, still in the study chair where he had slumped less than two hours before. With a shudder he realised that the whole thing was a dream - a ghastly nightmare! Crazy with relief he rushed out of the

study to make immediate amends for his conduct.

And from there, Edwy Searles Brooks, in Dickensian mood, completed an excellent tale. De Valerie gave every penny he possessed to the Griggs Fund, and he spent many happy hours on the ice with Mary. Once again his normal self, he made his peace with the fellows, and everything was as of old in Study M. For those who would read this unusual school story, it can be found in Old Series No. 391.

Cecil De Valerie remained one of the stalwarts of the Junior School throughout the long run of the NLL until the middle of the Second New Series. Then suddenly he was dropped from the tales. Once more we are reduced to sadness as we delve through those issues of 1932, vainly searching for some tangible sign that those characters we grew to love through the years were still at St. Frank's. The last time we find any trace of Cecil De Valerie is in Second New Series No. 98, where in company with the Duke of Somerton, Fullwood, Russell, Boots, Christine and others, he accepted an invitation to spend Christmas at Somerton Abbey. From then on, until the end a year later, he vanishes. That he was still at St. Frank's until the end we presume probable, as he contributed to Handforth's Weekly in NLL Nos. 122-5. Unfortunately, this must be conjecture, as we understand that Brooks was not responsible for Handforth's Weekly. Let us, therefore, close this short biography with a quotation from the last copy of the Old Paper in which Cecil De Valerie was mentioned.

".....The St. Frank's forwards, with a mighty rush, sliced clean through the helpless Caistowe defence.

SLAM!

De Valerie..... shot hard and true. The Caistowe goalie stumbled; he fumbled, and the ball was in the net.

'Goal!'

It was a loud shriek of triumph. St. Frank's had scored within the first ten minutes.

Freeman and Denny, in the forward line, ran up to De Valerie and clapped him on the back.

'Your turn next!' said De Valerie coolly. 'Go it! Let them know we are on the field, you chaps!'"

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES Bound for C.D. members carefully and competently at moderate charges. L. ASHLEY, 23, Mountjoy, Bridport, Dorset.
 (I can recommend Mr. Ashley's work. H.L.)

LETTER BOX

New Bunter T.V. Plays Coming

Rose Lawn, Kingsgate,
Broadstairs, Kent.

8th March, 1956.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Thanks for the C.D. --- good as ever. And to Eric Fayne and Jack Wood for the very kind reviews of "Lord Billy Bunter". It is true that, as the latter remarks, the story has been already televised, --- twice, in fact, --- but the book was written long before the radio play: we have to be very early off the mark in these days when, as Hurree Singh might say, procrastination is the politeness of printers! There was a radio play quite a good while ago founded on the next Bunter book, which will be out in September this year.

By the way, there will be another Bunter "repeat" on T.V. in July. Just at the moment I am busy on a new series of Bunter T.V. plays, which will come in the screen in the autumn, beginning probably in September.

With kindest regards,
Always your sincerely,
FRANK RICHARDS.

The Merseyside Branch O.B.B.C. requires complete NELSON LEE series; first, second or third. Full information to: NORMAN PRAGNELL, 33, Brae Street, Liverpool 7.

WANTED. SCHOOL FRIEND ANNUAL years 1928, 1929 and 1930. Your price paid. LEONARD PACKMAN, 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London S.E.22.

American Collector wishes to purchase old dolls and old buttons, 18th and 19th centuries. Any amount. Write: THEO OLBERT, Palais Albert Ier, Villefranche, Sur Mer, A.M. France.

FOR SALE. Collectors' Digest Annuals. Bound: 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950. Unbound: 1949-54. Bound Volume of C.D. Nos. 1-24, Nos. 24-100, loose. Bound Volume Scoops Nos. 1-20. Approx. 20 Wild West Weekly. Goldhawk and Mandeville Tom Merry Books, Bunter Books, Frank Richards Autobiography. P.J. CHECKLEY, 18, Tarlington Road, Goundon, Coventry.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

NORTHERN SECTION MEETING, MAY 12th, 1956

It was a Breeze Bentley evening for he was responsible for the whole programme; the first of four by individual members.

He started off the idea in impressive fashion with a giant quiz, no less than 92 questions all relative to Hamilton Schools, with a possible total of 120 points. And blow me, if that leading member of the rival gang, Jack Wood, of the Leeites, didn't show up all the Hamiltonians present by coming out top with no less than 96 points. Ron Hodgson followed with 87, Gerry Allison right on his heels with 86, and Bill Williamson next with 82. Yours truly a modest 64.

Yes, I can hear certain Leeites chuckling sardonically!

After much needed refreshments to get over the shock, Breeze read several chapters from Magnet No. 298, 'In Direst Peril'. The title is misleading for the laughter created was frequent as Mr. Prout stalked a very tame tiger.

During business Gerry reported the purchase of 70 vintage Gems. Next month, June 9th, Ernest Whitehead will be in command.

HERBERT LECKENBY,

Northern Section Correspondent.

MIDLAND SECTION MEETING, APRIL 30th

This was truly a memorable evening; it being good indeed to see that grand old gentleman Mr. Chapman once again, incidentally looking very fit and well. Truly the years sit lightly on those who were associated with bringing Greyfriars into being.

Mr. Chapman, who had been met at mid-day and entertained by our Chairman during the afternoon, was brought in at 7.40 to meet the clan, who had turned out in force. We were very pleased to see a keen member, Mr. George Smallwood who had been unable to join us for a very long time. Incidentally, he also introduced a new friend to us, a Mr. H. J. Bowles. This gentleman also brought his boy along.

Having made Mr. Chapman comfortable, we adopted his suggestion of asking questions. An intense barrage of question and comment followed which, however, Mr. Chapman stood most good humouredly.

Some most interesting information was gleaned on such matters as Editorial policy, stages in producing a paper, Art then and now, and

it was learned with interest that Greyfriars was visualised as a cross between Eton and Harrow. Nothing today like the old papers or the quality of the illustrations. Mr. Chapman is not at all impressed by Searle, Thurber & Co.

All too soon it was time for tea and the special refreshments. Miss Russell had again done us a splendid service in catering for us and providing such scrumptious comestibles.

We then resumed the programme, the first item being a reading by Tom Porter from that hilariously funny "Coker Expelled" series. Very well read this was too, and afterwards Mr. Chapman obliged us with some drawings in charcoal whilst sundry drawings by him were exhibited.

EDWARD DAVEY.

MERSEYSIDE SECTION, MAY MEETING

There was an even larger number of members present at this meeting, and this contributed in no small measure to the pleasure of the evening's proceedings, which were opened by Don's general survey of section affairs, and financial statement. He then gave us a comprehensive report on the recent exhibition, and all present were agreed that this innovation had been quite a success, and we are hoping it will be but a forerunner to similar events in adjacent towns later in the year. After refreshments, the remainder of the evening was spent in a game devised by Don, which was based on the radio "Ask Me Another" feature; this was a huge success. Each and every one put up a good show, which made the performance of the winner, Jack Morgan, a deservedly popular one, though he beat the runner-up Norman Pragnell, by very few points. "Give us another" soon, Don!

FRANK CASE.

LONDON SECTION

Frank Unwin and Don Webster were the two distinguished guests at the Packman's May meeting. Four good quizzes, a talk about the 1920 - 1921 covers of the "Union Jack" by Josie Packman and a good auction sale of "Magnets", "Union Jacks" and "Sexton Blake" libraries, with Chairman Len as the able auctioneer were the highlights of another delightful meeting. New ground for the June meeting, at Roger and David's flat in Kensington, and the September meeting at Woodingdean were amongst the future arrangements. Orders were taken for the next Bunter book, "The Banishing of Billy Bunter". My hat!! time to go home, what a crowded and happy meeting, a jolly good feed and plenty of laughs. Next instalment as hitherto stated on Sunday, 17th June, 4 p.m. at Kensington.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.