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DECEMBER 1959

# Digest



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# The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 13. No. 156

Price 1s. 6d.

DECEMBER, 1959

Editor:

ERIC FAYNE

Excelsior House  
Grove Road,  
Surbiton, Surrey.

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## HERBERT

By Eric Fayne

Nearly twenty years ago, soon after the outbreak of war, I first received a letter signed "Herbert Leckenby". I cannot recall the circumstances under which he first was moved to write to me, or from whence he obtained my name. But soon a regular correspondence was passing between us, and it continued until the day of his death. That strong, distinctive hand-writing of his became very much part of my life; rarely a week went by during which I did not have at least two letters from Herbert.

We had been pen-friends for a number of years before we met. In 1947 I was on holiday at Rhyl in North Wales, and I arranged to drive over to York one Saturday - a long journey - and meet Herbert. At noon we were shaking hands outside a York cinema.

If, on first meeting him, one felt any surprise, that feeling soon gave way to the realisation that here, to use a Yorkshire expression, was a man who had more in his shop than he showed in his window. As Herbert and I chatted with the passing hours, I felt the wonder, as expressed by Goldsmith:

"...And still the wonder grew

That one small head could carry all he knew."

We lunched together, walked the famous ramparts of the lovely old City, visited the museum, and had tea together. As I drove away, under the setting sun, I turned to wave to him, and carried with me the impression of a rather lonely figure.

At that time, the C.D. was in its infancy. I well remember the excited letters we had exchanged when the project of the C.D. was first mooted - the planning, the hopes, and, eventually, the realisation. With the coming of the C.D., Herbert Leckenby's life was consummated. It opened for him an entirely new vista of experience and joy; it increased his circle of acquaintances and friends by many hundredfold. It brought him a satisfaction he had never known before, a new status, a sense of purpose and fulfilment.

It would have been understandable now if he had neglected his old friends a little. He never did. His letters dropped into my letter-box with all their old regularity, and continued to do so till the end of his life. In all the twenty years we corresponded we never exchanged a heated word, there was never the slightest breath of disagreement, never a single moment gone sour. I treasure the memory.

Herbert, in some ways, was a strange, remarkable character. He was born on July 2nd, 1889, so that he was just over 70 at the time of his death.

We have just a few peeps into his boyhood as a result of some of his writings. Of his early manhood, we know very little. According to reports, he began his career as a printer, learning his trade with the Yorkshire Herald. One would have thought him in his element in the newspaper world. Yet we learn that he joined Northern Command at the start of the 1914 war, spent forty years as a switchboard operator. It seems a colourless forty years for a man with the brain of Herbert Leckenby.

For, make no mistake, Herbert was a man of exceptional talents. If, as I believe, there is a higher hand which guides the destinies of men, is it not certain that, in the last thirteen years of his life he filled the place and did the work for which he had always been intended? It is no exaggeration, perhaps, to say that he came to life with the birth of the C.D.

Perhaps, for the first time, he found an outlet for the gifts God had given him. He had a keen eye for the tastes of his readers; a wealth of tact, which kept for him the countless friends which he made by his kindness; a clever pen; a boundless energy; a shrewd business sense, without which all his gifts as an editor might have been wasted. He was easy-going, which made him lovable, but he had a hard core of strong character, based on a firm sense of truth and justice.

In running, single-handed, this magazine and the Annual in all its various facets, Herbert Leckenby accomplished something which could have only been achieved by a man dedicated. A remarkable character.

His passing has left a void which can never be filled. Those of us who knew him will never forget him. Perhaps Herbert would say: "It is wonderful to be missed."

And how we all miss him.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### HERBERT LECKENBY LAID TO REST

The funeral of Herbert Leckenby took place on Monday, 26th October, 1959. After a simple and moving service at the Methodist Church, the interment took place at York Cemetery.

Many relatives and numerous members of the O.B.B.C., followed the coffin to its last resting place. There were many beautiful floral tributes.

The Collectors' Digest, and members of the Old Boys' Book Clubs all over the world, extend to Mr. Raymond Leckenby, Herbert's son, and all the family, their very deepest sympathy at this sad time. We hope that Mr. Raymond Leckenby may glean great comfort from the knowledge of the universal esteem in which his father was held.

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## TRIBUTES

Tributes to our late Editor and friend, Herbert Leckenby, have poured in, in an unceasing stream. Lack of space makes it quite impossible to print them all, or even to quote from them all, but here is a representative selection, showing the affection and esteem in which Herbert was held by all his readers.

FRANK RICHARDS: (President of the O.B.B.C.) "I am deeply saddened to learn of Herbert's death. The news has cast a gloom over my day."

FRANK CASE: "The loss of Herbert could not affect me more if he were a near relative. Whom the gods love, died young! I think that applies to Herbert, for he died a boy at heart. God be with him!"

HAROLD LACK: "My only regret is that I never had the pleasure and privilege of meeting Herbert, but I shall always have happy memories of one who, I am sure, must have been a very charming person."

HAYDN SALMON: "A brave and patient man, of that there is no question - and, even if I cannot claim to have had the same personal contact,

through lack of opportunity, as perhaps a number of the members, I have always felt him a true friend."

STANLEY KNIGHT: "What a wonderful monument to him is the world-wide membership of Old Boys' Book lovers, which, through his vision and enthusiasm, he brought into being."

F. ADDINGTON SYMONDS (Founder and Chief Editor "The Champion" and Associated Journals - Amalgamated Press, Ltd., 1922-24): "The passing of Herbert Leckenby is a grave and irreparable loss to the cause for which he worked for so long and with such self-sacrificing enthusiasm. He did more, perhaps, than any man to keep the love of the old boys' papers alive and to revive golden memories among those who, like myself, were actively associated with many of these journals in the past. A kindly and generous man, he had a quiet, pervasive charm that endeared him to all with whom he came into contact; and he was a good and loyal friend, as I personally have reason to remember. That his great work will live long after him is at least certain. No less, surely, must he himself be remembered with pride and affection by all who had the privilege of his friendship. May his kindly soul rest in peace."

GEORGE SELLARS: "The spirit never dies...the Good lives on eternally ...only the baser things can die. I regarded our Herbert as a very good friend ever since I discovered his beloved C.D. in May, 1953. Although I never had the honour of speaking to him, I had, through the medium of his many letters to me, a feeling that I had known him for a very long time."

J. SHEPHERD: "It is impossible to express one's feelings properly, but he will know what we thought of him. I can express it best in one word we use in Yorkshire. He was a 'Toff'"

ALEXANDER STANDEN: "A little more of Old England has gone with his passing."

ARTHUR CARBIN: "I shall miss his friendship for a long time, and shall never forget him. I wrote and told him that he and Charles Hamilton had given me some of the happiest hours of my life. The trumpets must certainly have sounded for him on the other side. May he rest in peace."

CHARLES BAKER: "When he wrote, his letters were always so kind and understanding."

EDWARD BLIGHT: "It will be a long time before collectors, all over

the world, forget the tremendous energy that he put into the organising and producing of the C.D. and the Annual.

MARK JOHNSON: "Like many hundreds of others, who owe much to Herbert, I feel his passing keenly."

FRANK UNWIN: "To me, personally, Herbert's death is a sad blow. We corresponded regularly, exchanging cricket news and views, and I always enjoyed reading his very sage and interesting comments on County and Test cricket.

"Herbert loved life and he was loved by his many friends the world over. He must have been a happy man in this knowledge. Through his wonderful work he gave happiness to thousands. Surely he will be well rewarded because of that."

BILL LOFTS: "It is impossible for one to put into words the amount of good, the sheer hard work he put into the hobby. The collecting world will never be the same again without his guidance.

"Well, Bill" said Herbert, when I saw him off at King's Cross, a few weeks ago, "that's another good visit over. Hope to see you at Christmas."

"We won't see you at Christmas, Herbert, but I'm sure you will be with us in spirit always. We will never forget you."

H. W. TWYMAN (Editor of 'Union Jack' 1921-33 and D.W.): "Practically single-handed, he built up an organisation that has become world-wide in only a few years, and apparently he had all the strings of it in his own hands, the circumstances being what they were. It is a notable achievement which is not widely known as it deserves to be. And although it could not have happened without the co-operation of his fellow enthusiasts, the fact is that it did happen, and it was his leadership that made it happen. Maybe the O.B.B.C. widespread growth had an element of good timing about it - the right thing at the right moment - but, just the same, it couldn't have got anywhere without the single-minded devotion of a man who could, and did, make the advancement of the hobby his full time interest. I'm sorry that I never met him."

WALTER WEBB: "To have contributed to a magazine by one who, by his enthusiasm and devotion to the cause, contributed so enormously to the enjoyment of so many of his kind, is an honour not lightly valued, and I mourn his loss very deeply."

HARRY DOWLER: "I was Herbert's first hobby friend. I spent many happy hours with him in the streets of York, and also in his little





## From the Editor's Chair

In September, Herbert Leckenby visited me at my home. He asked me to take over the control and production of this journal and of the Annual.

It was a great surprise, and, indeed, a shock to me. I have always enjoyed writing for the C.D., but never had I entertained the thought that I might one day occupy the editorial chair. I had never wanted such a responsibility.

I considered Herbert's request. To my eyes, he was, even then, a dying man - and I felt that I could not refuse what was obviously his earnest desire. I agreed - on the understanding that I would not take over until he felt quite unable to carry on, and on the distinct understanding that he should resume his old place at any time he might feel able to do so.

Naturally, there were many business details for us to go into together. It was arranged that I should go to York on Thursday, 22nd October. My hotel accommodation was booked. On Friday, October 23rd, Herbert and I were to spend the day together at the offices of our publishers, and plans were to be effected so that I could step into his place immediately in any emergency.

But on Wednesday morning, October 21st, I had a telephone call to tell me that our much-loved editor was dead. I went north a few days later - to attend Herbert's funeral.

If only he had been spared a few days longer, so much trouble and anxiety would have been avoided. At present, all Herbert's effects are in the hands of solicitors; all his assets are frozen. As will be readily understood, it is only with the greatest difficulty that I am able to prevent a big hiatus in the production and mailing of this paper. It is likely to be a long time before we get everything on an even keel again.

With your permission and co-operation, I intend to do my best to carry on. I promise you that I shall do my utmost to maintain the high level, both intellectually and morally, that Herbert always attained with this journal, one of the great loves of his life.

### HARD FACTS

The fact emerges - and it is a startling and discomfoting fact - that Herbert ran both the C.D. and the Annual at a considerable loss, subsidising them from his own slender income. Whether the C.D. and the Annual can be made self-supporting it is impossible to say at

present, but it is clear that much of Herbert's trouble was due to a dilatory method of payment on the part of a surprisingly large number of his subscribers.

There is little doubt that all of us took Herbert too much for granted, and a few, from thoughtlessness, took advantage of his easy-going good nature. Some, of course, always paid well in advance for the C.D. and Annual, and helped him by sending along a stamped envelope to save him time and expense in his welcome reply. But many paid very much in arrears - and some did not pay at all. This unhappy, slipshod system gave him great anxiety and tremendous extra work.

Herbert died in harness, as he would have wished. But I, at least, have no doubt at all that his life came to a premature end at the shrine of these journals which he loved, and we love, so much.

### THE FUTURE

I can cope with the editorial work - and my aim will be to give you satisfaction. I can cope with the voluminous correspondence, and even though I cannot write so many letters as Herbert did, every reader will know that I am delighted to be pelted with correspondence and literary contributions, even if my replies are, of necessity, short.

I cannot, however, cope with the past system of running the finances of the magazine. I am convinced that nobody else could cope with it either, for the paper would grind to a stop in a welter of book-keeping. And, even if one could cope with it, such complicated transactions are intolerable.

Slack payments by the few are unfair to the editor, who must pay as he goes; unfair to the majority who co-operate to the fullest; unfair to the C.D., acting as a dragging anchor while the engines go full speed ahead.

In future, the C.D. and the Annual will be operated on an advance subscription basis. Subscriptions can be paid for any period - one month, twelve months - anything the reader finds the most convenient. When the subscription expires, a reminder will be sent with the magazine.

I have had no opportunity yet to study the question of advertisements, but I am given to understand that these have been accepted on a scale of great variation. It does not seem fair that some should pay the full rate, which is reasonable enough, while others pay less than half or on the never-never. I hope to be able to make a definite statement on this point next month, but in the meantime insertions are at one penny per word, serial numbers of papers counting as half a

word. It appears inevitable that the C.D. will be published at a loss for some time to come. If, as I hope and believe, in the fullness of time it can be made to pay its way, the benefit will be passed on to readers in a larger magazine, which will give more scope in every way.

With your sympathetic support and understanding, it will be my aim to maintain the C.D. as a journal of which we can be proud - a fitting memorial to our great Editor who is gone.

THANK YOU

I offer my heartfelt thanks to two Trojans of York, who, during these recent anxious weeks, have rendered inestimable service to the C.D. and myself. It was due entirely to Mr. Jack Wood that the November issue came out on time, and he has worked, tirelessly and unselfishly, to help to clear the chaos which descended upon us with Herbert's death. Mr. Gore-Browne, director of the York Duplicating Services, spent the entire day with me, ironing out difficulties, while I was in York - and thereby landed himself with hours of night work to do to make up for his lost day. Since then, though this is his busiest time of the year, he has been ever at my beck and call - writing me long and helpful letters, making long distance telephone calls, willing and anxious to help me in every way. Thank you, two very grand gentlemen.

Finally, grateful thanks to the many scores of people who have written me such heartwarming letters of encouragement in my new task. I have tried to acknowledge every letter, but if, inadvertently, anyone has not heard from me, please accept my thanks now.

*The Editor*

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# B L A K I A N A

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

It is nice to be back home and looking after my column once again, but it is with sadness at the death of Herbert Leckenby that I prepare this 'copy' for Eric Payne, our new editor and publisher.

For the past ten years or more both Len and myself came to look upon Herbert as something more than a friend, and the pleasure of entertaining him on his visits to London was something we always looked forward to. Like my husband, I also have very happy memories of a certain Christmas spent at Knaresborough, at which time we spend a day at York with Herbert and his wife. Our daughter, Eleanor, was with us, she was quite a young girl then - on that occasion, and has had a soft spot in her heart for Herbert ever since....

We are very fortunate to have Eric continue where Herbert left off, and it is up to us to give our new Editor all the support we can, thereby making his Labour of Love a pleasure.

JOSIE PACKMAN

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CENTURY-MAKERS

(And a few other interesting statistics)

BY WALTER WEBB

INSTALMENT NINE

DEATH OF A STALWART

Sexton Blake writers were crowded together in quite a packed throng in 1924; but this did not act in any way as a deterrent to aspiring newcomers, who continued to wedge themselves in to swell the number of overwhelming proportions, though, but for one very notable exception, none were destined to last very long. First was (52) WARWICK REYNOLDS, who, after making a temporary excursion from the closely associated field of artists and making not the slightest impression with the pen in this - to him - new and unfamiliar medium, promptly returned to his chosen profession. The author of the name of Lomax who volunteered a story for the U.J. in February was obviously, by the style in which it was written, the work of Lomax of the pink-covered era, so he can hardly be introduced as a new writer. A month later, Walter Shute, who started at the A.P. as an office boy, worked

himself up to becoming an editor of the U.J. and then, not caring for the job, went freelancing and was next to take the field, though it is not unlikely that he started a little earlier - maybe in the late pink-jacketed U.J. days. To Blake readers and those who remember his sporting tales for various publications for boys he was better known as (53) WALTER EDWARDS.

April saw the arrival of that turbulent, mercurial character from Portmadoc, North Wales, the 23 year-old (54) GWYN EVANS, one of the most unreliable yet brilliant authors ever to take up the pen on behalf of Sexton Blake; and this is literally the truth, for Gwyn never used a typewriter, all his work being submitted in a neat readable hand.

Debutantes continued to take the course at the rate of about one a month, for in May came (55) HAROLD W. TWYMAN, better known as the editor who succeeded Walter Shute on the U.J., and on consequence suffered many a headache in his dealings with the previously mentioned writer. Then, in June, followed (56) JOHN W. WHEWAY, and obviously Cecil Hayter had crossed the border, for the new writer took over his famous characters, Lobangu and Sir Richard Losely, and the story he wrote about them is chiefly remembered for the miss-spelling of the name of Losely throughout the whole tale. John Wheway was said to have been an admirer of the characters, which makes it all the more surprising why he did not know that there was only one 'e' in the name 'Losely'; for, if nothing else, this proved one thing - that the hand of a sub-writer was responsible, though - let it be admitted, in all fairness - a very competent one at that. As 'Hilda Richards' later on in his career, the author wrote stories of that captivating schoolgirl character, Barbara Redfern, and her chums at Cliff House School, originated by the one and only Frank Richards.

The August Bank Holiday issues of the S.B.L. included a novel by (57) J. G. JONES, who became struck by that most terrible of all afflictions - blindness. Like Wheway, J. G. Jones wrote stories for girls too, under the nom-de-plume of "Enid Earle", using "Ambrose" instead of Enid when writing for boys. In September (58) CRICHTON MILN came along, but there is a theory that he might have written some of the early pink-covered U.J. Stories, though at the time of writing nothing is definitely known. A man named (59) TYLER arrived in October, presented a story which Mr. Twyman considered good enough for inclusion in the U.J. and was never heard of again. Neither, up to the time of writing, is his Christian name definitely known. The last Union Jack of the year 1924 introduced (60) ANTHONY BARON, though when the story written by him was republished in "Detective Weekly" in

1938, the name of John Baron was given.

In 1924 Andrew Murray's last published story appeared. It was called "The Sign of the Yellow Dragon", and brought to an untimely close both in the U.J. and the S.B.L. the work of an author who had given of his best where the adventures of Sexton Blake and Tinker were concerned. In these records he holds a proud position, having totalled 165 novels, which included 70 for the S.B.L. and 95 for the U.J., though in the latter publication it is barely possible that he did eventually attain the hundred mark; for in my records there are six stories wholly unaccounted for in regard to authorship, and if Murray wrote all these, or at least, five, then, on his behalf, it can be claimed that he is deserving of inclusion, with Graydon and Teed, as being one of only three authors to have written one hundred stories for the U.J. alone. One of the stalwarts of Blake fiction, several little errors are to be observed in Andrew Murray's last stories, due no doubt, to declining health. It has been stated that he died of paralysis.

Into the place vacated by him glided G. H. Teed, with a tally of stories only 30 less than Murray's final figure and 75 behind Graydon, who continued comfortably placed at the top having seen the eclipse of his nearest rival. With 53 stories E. S. Brooks had now moved forward considerably, and, in fifth place, was only nine contributions behind Robert Murray.

The three new names in 1925 included (61) JOHN NIX PENTELOW, famous for his grand serials of County cricket in the Boys' Realm; (62) NORMAN TAYLOR, another well-known sports' writer; and (63) YOUNG, whose Christian name is not known, but which may have been Stewart, who wrote some detective tales in the Boys' Herald earlier on. At the end of a not very inspiring year the leading positions stood thus:

W. M. Graydon (219); G. H. Teed (160); Mark Osborne (76); Robert Murray (68); E. S. Brooks (58).

The only recruit in 1926 was the already ageing (64) ARTHUR PATERSON, who, at 64 contributed his first Sexton Blake story. And here is a strange coincidence; for it was on Paterson's birthday that the story which marked his debut appeared in the U.J. He was born on 15th July, 1862 and it was on Thursday, 15th July, 1926 that the story appeared. Sad to relate, in another eighteen months and one day, he was to pass on, leaving eight unpublished Blake stories behind him.

With several other authors passing the half-century mark it is necessary to give the latest details at this stage, the end of the year, 1926. W. M. Graydon (230); G. H. Teed (177); Mark Osborne (78); Robert Murray (71); E. S. Brooks (60); Allan Blair (56);

Gilbert Chester (54); Lewis Jackson (52). Passing Andrew Murray's figure of 165 stories, G. H. Teed thus became second highest to Graydon in the number of Blake stories written, and the end of the year saw the latter's lead reduced to 57, fine going when it is remembered that Graydon had eight years start over Teed and that the latter lost over four years' writing between October, 1917 and February, 1922 due to travels abroad. And with 54 tales to his credit Gilbert Chester, with a little acceleration of progress, could achieve the feat of passing the hundred mark at a faster rate than Graydon did, the latter's time being seven years and one month; though with 46 stories still to write in two and a half years Chester would certainly have to exert himself.

1927 - and another spate of new faces, eight in all, five in the U.J., the remainder in the pages of the S.B.L. First (65) LADBROKE BLACK, who wrote his first Blake when in his 50th year and contributed some pretty desultory stuff afterwards, many of the yarns appearing under the name of Paul Urquhart. This pen-name is interesting because it was also used by a man with whom Black collaborated on occasion, but who, it must be clearly stressed, did not use it in the writing of Sexton Blake stories. Thomas Cox Meech, a parliamentary journalist and lecturer, and the author in question, was Paul Urquhart when jointly writing with Black such work as "The Eagles", "The Web" "The Shadow" and others; but Paul Urquhart was Ladbroke Black where Blake was concerned. Strangely enough, both Black and Meech died within three months of one another in 1940.

(66) TOM STENNER made his debut with a pleasing story of the Turf in March, and he was followed in April by (67) HOUGHTON TOWNLEY. A tale about yachting brought in (68) C. MALCOLM HINCKS in July, and he was closely followed by Gerald Verner, who wrote all his Blake stories under the pseudonym of (69) DONALD STUART. (70) LESTER BIDSTON came next, followed a week or two later by (71) R. L. HADFIELD; and although (72) STACEY BLAKE is introduced here for the first time, he may, as an old hand, have contributed in the pink-covered U.J. days.

And so, into 1928, with Teed just six short of his 200 and only 47 behind Graydon, a position made even more interesting by the fact that yet another author enters the records - Anthony Skene, with a not out score of 51.

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FOR SALE: C.D.'s Nos. 63-130, 9d each. C.D. Annuals 1952-1956 7/- each. All inclusive of postage. NORMAN PRAGNELL, 33 BRAE STREET, LIVERPOOL, 7.

S.B.L. REVIEWSOCTOBER, 1959WALK IN THE SHADOWS (No. 437)REX DOLPHIN

A novel which is not only above the usual length but is correspondingly higher in quality than the average S.B.L. as well. Quotation here of two well-worn and hackneyed phrases is resisted because it would be tantamount to practically giving away the identity of who-did-it in this neatly constructed but by no means original mystery of the murder of Gordon Allbright, a man familiar and feared in the world of commerce, whose sudden death brought against the heads of various employees of the Kirkdale Television Limited the stabbing finger of suspicion.

Even the most critical of Blake devotees will like the way Sexton Blake is portrayed here - the human, kindly and considerable champion of the oppressed, yet the implacable and tenacious enemy of the suppressor. Paula's services are not required, but Marion, a rapidly maturing member of the organisation, again proves her metal in a case which nets the firm a well-earned £20,000. Tinker also plays an important part.

Rating.....Very good.

\* \* \*

TOUCH OF EVIL (No. 438)ARTHUR MACLEAN

Sexton Blake, Tinker, Paula Dane and Splash Kirby among the mountains, glens and lochs of Bonnie Scotland. For love and romance the perfect setting; but it was into something much less idyllic that Blake and Splash foraged as, in the former's silver-grey Bentley, they raced through the gentle slopes of heather and gorse. such a contributory factor to the rugged beauty of the Highlands, en route for the Rocket Research Establishment at Kilbreck for the purpose of obtaining for the newspaperman an interview with the Director in which to glean facts and figures on Britain's Geophysical Research Programme for the 'Daily Post'.

Blake's interest in the proceedings, somewhat detached at first. is enlivened into active participation when he sees Karla Lindemann, a once beautiful scientist but now an emaciated and ageing woman, throw herself from the roof of the building. To Arthur Maclean has fallen the distinction of being the first author to bring Blake into contact with the unknown perils which lurk in the vastnesses of outer space.

Rating.....Very good.

WALTER WEBB.



# HAMILTONIANA

## FISHY THOUGHT OF IT FIRST

Early in November the national press reported the activities of two boys at Lowestoft Grammar School, who started an Insurance Scheme against punishments. Insured members get 4/- for a caning, 3/- for detention, 1/- for every hundred lines, and so on. A master at the school, perhaps admiring his pupils' initiative, put something about the scheme in the school magazine.

In the "Daily Telegraph" for November 3rd, Mr. G. E. Dixon of Redditch wrote a letter to the Editor, pointing out that the originator of the idea was Frank Richards. "In one of his Greyfriars stories, written 40 years ago in the Magnet, one of his characters, Fisher T. Fish, organised the P.B.P.I.C., which meant the Pro Bono Publico Insurance Company."

Mr. Dixon ended his letter: "Dare one suggest that the pupils of Lowestoft Grammar School had somehow come across a copy of that old Magnet?"

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## FRANK RICHARDS ON RADIO

On Monday evening, November 16th, Frank Richards was heard in Radio Newsreel. The B.B.C. called the item "Old tunes in dead languages", and Mr. Richards was interviewed concerning his recent hobby of translating famous songs into Latin. The interviewer made the slip of announcing that "Fifty years ago Mr. Richards created Billy Bunter in a paper called the "Gem." That was near enough for the B.B.C.

Mr. Richards was an unqualified success, his pleasant voice coming delightfully, and with real youth, over the air. Then, to surprise us all, he sang three well-known ditties which he has put into Latin: "There is a Tavern in the Town" "Waltzing Matilda" and "The Man on the Flying Trapeze." To hear Frank sing was a real experience. If Frankie Vaughan and Frank Sinatra were listening in, they would realise that they have to look to their laurels. Another Frank has them beaten at their own game.

In jesting mood, with a real boyish touch, Mr. Richards completed his broadcast with a parody, in Latin, of Byron's Venerable Bede. Asked to construe, Mr. Richards obliged: "While Billy Bunter stands,

Frank Richards stands; when Bunter falls, Frank Richards falls; and when Richards falls, there will be an end to the art of writing for young people."

And so say all of us. Congratulations, Frank Richards. A mighty fine show. May Billy Bunter's Colosseum stand for a long, long time to come!

Part of the programme was repeated in "Pick of the Week" on the following Friday.

\* \* \* \* \*

### BILLY BUNTER at the VICTORIA PALACE

Gerald Campion will be Billy Bunter again for four weeks, commencing December 22nd, at the Victoria Palace, for matinees only. The new show is entitled "Billy Bunter Flies East." The opening scene is set at the school, after which Harry Wharton and his friends go to India, accompanied, without their knowledge, by the Owl of the Remove. Though the play is not written by Frank Richards it comes to London with our author's approval and good wishes.

It is written by Maurice McLoughlin, a man who knows his Greyfriars, and he has tried hard to make sure that there shall be nothing which might be irritating to the most conservative Hamiltonian. Mr. McLoughlin is now a subscriber to the C.D. He speaks of the sadness he feels when he recollects the hundreds of Magnets which have passed through his hands and beyond his reach. He still has four Holiday Annuals which he cherishes.

We appeal to all C.D. readers, so far as they are able, to support this show. Very few of the heroes of our youth are left to us. It is up to us to keep alive the few which remain, and give all our help to keep them going strong.

The London Club is organising a party for Saturday, January 2nd, and has booked a block of seats at the Victoria Palace. It is expected that photographs will be taken of our party with Billy Bunter and Co., and it promises to be an hilarious afternoon.

If you would like to join the party on January 2nd, drop a few lines to Ben Whiter, the Secretary of the London Club, with your remittance at 12/6 per seat, or to the Editor of the C.D. You will be given a warm welcome.

In any case, please take your relatives and friends - and particularly the youngsters (the Billy Bunter fans of to-morrow) - to the show, some time during its run, and then write and tell us your opinion of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

MORE ABOUT THE "VIC" SHOW

Last year, Bernadette Milnes and Michael Anthony (who are man and wife in private life) obtained the rights to present Billy Bunter on the stage for the first time. The show was more successful than even they had imagined it could be, delighting audiences of all ages. We hope that they will be equally successful with this year's production.

At present, Bernadette and Michael are appearing in the B.B.C. Television series "Private Investigator."

Maurice McLoughlin (referred to earlier), the writer of the play, was once a cartoonist with "Punch". He has a twelve-year-old son, Adam, who, presumably, is also a Greyfriars fan.

On November 19th, David Stuart (grandson of the famous composer, Leslie Stuart), called at our "editorial office" and spent a happy time discussing Billy Bunter, browsing over old Magnets and back issues of the C.D., and getting genuinely interested in hobby matters. Mr. Stuart, who is now a subscriber to the C.D., is the assistant-producer of the new Victoria Palace show. He is particularly keen on the school stories by Desmond Coke.

\* \* \* \* \*

I MEET GEORGE RICHMOND SAMWAYS - Part 5

By W. O. G. Lofts

Foreword

This is the last of the present series of articles and I would very much like to express my appreciation to the many readers who have written to me, and who have shown such interest in Mr. Samways' revelations. At a later date, more articles on Mr. Samways will be written for the interest of C.D. readers - perhaps an article from Mr. Samways' own pen.

Readers who receive the "Story Paper Collector" will perhaps be interested to know that a full-length article on Mr. Samways will be in issue No. 71, complete with a photograph. Unfortunately, for technical reasons, it was not possible to reproduce the photograph in the C.D.

MORE QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

Q. It was once suggested that substitute stories in the Magnet and the Gem should have been published under the authors' own names. Do you agree with this?

A. "The names 'Frank Richards' and 'Martin Clifford' were used from the beginning to the end of Magnet and Gem history. This was editorial,

if not dictatorial, policy - and certainly all the substitute writers of my acquaintance were content to remain anonymous. These pen-names had endeared themselves so much to schoolboy readers that I think it would have been a great mistake to change them whenever a substitute story was published. Imagine a Magnet story suddenly appearing as by Edwy Searles Brooks or by G. R. Samways - or even by Charles Hamilton! The idolaters of Frank Richards would have been disappointed, to say the least, and, however good the story happened to be, it would have been compared unfavourably with a "Frank Richards" yarn, and the confidence of readers would have been undermined.

After all, if a substitute writer desired personal glory, all he had to do was to write for other periodicals under his own name."

Q. Apart from your work on the Companion Papers, can you give me any details of other writings you have done?

A. I did a great deal of original writing, quite independently of the Companion Papers. I had a serial, "The Greater Game" in "FLYING"; poems in all the aeronautical journals; short stories in "SCOUT" and also, one of the hardest things to achieve, a poem in "PUNCH." My verse has also appeared in "Answers", "THE PASSING SHOW" and THE SUNDAY PICTORIAL. I have also had several bound books published - one a book of poems entitled "War Lyrics".

Q. Can you name any other writers, perhaps unknown to me, who have penned Magnet and Gem yarns?

A. There was a writer named W. L. Catchpole, who was successful in the Greyfriars Story Competition in 1915. He certainly wrote for the Gem and Magnet. A former sub-editor, W. E. J. Pike, may have written a few.

### CONCLUSION

I have been most fortunate in tracking down these two writers, and some very interesting facts and data have come to light. I shall be sending these to the new editor in the New Year.

Mr. W. L. Catchpole, also wrote Sexton Blake stories under the name of "Roland Howard", which enabled me to solve another mystery as this name was outstanding on Derek Adley's and my own authors' list to be revealed in the Sexton Blake columns. The End.

\* \* \* \* \*

RESULT OF QUIZZLE NO. 12. CLUE DOWN: "Twelve months Old". HIDDEN WORDS: "Bunter Court, according to Bunter." First correct solution received from D. B. Webster, 23 West Park Road, Kew, to whom 5/- has been sent.

QUIZZLE No. 13

A	1								2
B			3	4					
C	5			6					
D	7								
E		8	9						
F	10	11							
G	12			13					
H	14								
I	15	16	17						
J	18		19						
K	20								21
L				22					23
M	24	25							
N			26	27					
O		28			29				

The letters in the numbered squares, if placed in sequence in the lower grid, will spell out the way any Gem Christmas story might have opened.

CLUE DOWN: A. Where Billy Bunter excels himself (9,6)

CLUES ACROSS:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	

- A. Fatty between the posts.  
 B. It's not superior to Greyfriars, but don't expect Winstow to agree.  
 C. Does Smithy give this when he plays strip poker? (3, 4)  
 D. One Magnet only is followed by a girl.  
 E. The Redwings of Hawkscliff.  
 F. Figgins sounds oddly like a piece of furniture. (4, 3)  
 G. No score, and it's over, Clara.  
 H. Hasthis Fourth Former won his wings? You bet he hasn't.  
 I. It may be hot in the middle, but this sort of work wouldn't do for Quelch.  
 J. Return reward for Robert Whiter.  
 K. Bunter's titled relations are spirited at heart, but entirely this.

- L. This makes Selby irritable, perhaps.  
 M. The kind of wonder Frank Richards writes about. (4, 4)  
 N. Big, like Billy Bunter.  
 O. If young Carter Paterson went to Greyfriars, would he become this?

\* \* \* \* \*

Write on a postcard the words in the lower grid and the answer to the Clue down. 5/- to the sender of the first correct solution received by the editor.

\* \* \* \* \*  
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LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

(In this series, Eric Fayne touches on certain matters of interest to students of the Hamilton papers. He gives his own view superficially. If you will write to him, expressing your opinions on the topics he discusses, he will summarise readers' views in a future issue.)

No. 33. CHUMLEY FOR SHORT

How is your pronunciation? Do you call Levison "Leevy-sun" and Ogilvy "Oggle-vee"? Do you say "Rill-cum" or "Rile cumby"? Does it matter, in any case? Of course it doesn't! The rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

We all know that Cholmondeley is "Chumley" and St. John is "Sin-jun" and Marjoribanks is "Marshbanks". If the B.B.C. is to be believed (it probably isn't) Compton is pronounced "Cumpton" and Montgomery is "Muntgummary", and Austria is "Orr-stria". My old headmaster used to call a vase a "vawse", (quite all right), Gilbert Harding calls a laboratory a "labber-atree" (correct enough), and the Americans call a tomato a "ter-may-toe" (horrible).

I knew a family named Tripe who pronounced it "Tree-pay", and another family called Onions who called themselves "O-nye-uns". Luckily they lived far apart. I have heard that folk with the good old English name of Sidebottom like to be called "Sid-boom", but I can't vouch for that.

In saying the names of our schoolboy characters, it is likely that many of us pronounce them as they occurred to us when we were children. When I confess that, as a child, I always called Pontius Pilate "Pointed Pillitt", it will be seen how misleading I must be as a potential guide to this sort of thing.

A well-known English family of Levison call themselves "Loosen". It is likely, however, that most of us call our Levison "Levvy-sun", which is pleasant to the ear, and probably what the author intended. I have heard this character called "Leevy-sun", which may pass, but is hardly so tuneful.

In Scotland, "Kerr" is "Carr", but I daresay most of us call him "Cur", as we did when we were younger. I do, for one.

As a lad I called Ogilvy "Er-gill-vee", the gill soft as in "fish". Today, I call him "Oggle-vee", though it might well be correct to say "O-gll-vee", or even "Odge-ll-vee."

Wharton is undoubtedly akin to the man who had a wart on his nose. For that reason, I am puzzled as to why deaf or forgetful people in the stories (Mr. Woose, for example) have addressed Wharton as "Carton" or

"Carter".

Some folk call Outram, the grand Blue Cover character, "Out-tram". Personally, I prefer the more soothing "Ooo-trum."

As a boy, seeking to air my newly-acquired knowledge of French, I called Lefevre "Lay-favre". Nowadays, I think of him as "Ler-fever" but if you call him "Ler-fever" you are just as prone to be right.

What about Lowther? I like the pronunciation the Scotch give their Lowther Hills, rhyming Low with Cow. Some people rhyme the Low with "Toe", and who am I to say them nay?

Do you say Quelch to rhyme with "belch" or to rhyme with "Welsh"? I prefer the latter, but it's all a matter of taste.

Maulverer is, I think, "Mer-levver-er", but it's all the same to me if you call him "Mauly-vera" or even "Mer-levver-ay", if you are a bit pedantic.

Our English language being what it is, Lovell is, of course, "Luvvell" to rhyme with "shovel". Kerruish is "Cur-roosh" and Monteith is "Mon-teeth", though, as a kid, I called the latter "Monty-ith."

Wodehouse School, where Cardew originated, might be "Woad-house" after the early Britons, or "Woodhouse" after the novelist, or even "Woddus", after the Sid-booms. You never can tell.

D'Arcy is certainly "Dar-see", though I have heard the name mentioned with a hiccup. Lascelles, I feel sure, is pronounced to rhyme with "vassals", and should not be "Lass-sells".

Pensonby, to most of us, is almost certainly "Pon-sun-bee", but I believe the correct pronunciation would be "Punsby".

Talbot, of course, can be "Toll-but" or "Tall-but," though I like, probably incorrectly, to rhyme the "Tal" with "pal".

As a horrible child, speaking from the stomach, I used to confuse Nugent with "nougat" and call them both "Nugget".

"Let's Be Controversial", this month, reminds me of the little girl, who, while having tea at the party, called out "Wanna go levity". This column, with sad loss of dignity, has sunk to levity, and our only excuse is that Christmas is near. In January, when the bills come in, we shall be serious once again.

It's just my point of view! What's yours?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### CONTROVERSIAL ECHOES

#### No. 31. PRINTER'S PIE AND AUTHOR'S ERRORS

BILL LOFTS writes; "Charles Hamilton was inconsistent with the names of his characters. I could quote quite a few instances, but the best

known is the different Christian names he gave to Mr. Quelch. The blame for this, has been put at the doors of the substitute writers, in the past, which was unfair to them. This actually brought about the famous Greyfriars Gallery, for Mr. Samways was anxious to establish the correct christian names of the characters.

I agree with you that Mr. Hamilton wasted many of the fine characters he created - especially the Greek, Ionides, whom you mention. Another character not introduced again after a very fine story, though he was still in the Remove, was Arthur Carlton (Magnet 185), a real slacker if there ever was one. Strange also that the previous week Lord Mauleverer has arrived on the scene.

The Magnet with Rylcombe across the cover, which you mention, was I think "The Shylock of the Second", written by Pentelow in 1917, and I agree that the author (who was also the editor at this time) made a bad slip. This, I think, proves that Pentelow must have gleaned all his authentic data on Greyfriars from Mr. Samways' records, as related in my article, and he did not know his Greyfriars as well as he should have done. In 1917, Mr. Samways was away serving with the R.F.C., and had nothing to do, of course, with the sub-editing of this story."

FRANK HANCOCK writes: "I suppose that most Hamilton fans can think of a number of inconsistencies, but some of them cannot be laid at the author's door.

In an early Holiday Annual there was a detailed plan of Greyfriars, which it was difficult to reconcile with some of the happenings in the stories. For instance, the masters' studies are shown dotted all over the place, whereas, in the Magnet we were always reading about "Masters' Passage". It is sometimes difficult to determine whether we are on the ground or upper floors of the various schools; not that it matters very much, admittedly. Still, the reader sometimes gets the impression of slapdash work.

I think the simple truth is that Charles Hamilton and his publishers thought that they were producing magazine stories (like Conan Doyle and his Sherlock Holmes), which could be read, enjoyed, and then forgotten, not realising that they would become classics of their kind, and read and re-read many years after their first publication. If they had so realised, they would have been more careful with names and geography."

ERIC FAYNE adds: "I referred to Ionides as an extremely original character who appeared regularly for quite a long time in early days. This does not mean that I think the casual characters, and Charles



Hamilton has invented hundreds of them, should have remained on the scene after their particular part was played. In fact, I have often stated my opinion that it was a mistake when a character, however excellent and attractive he might be, was left on the scene to enlarge an already big cast. This mistake was not made in more recent years, when many fine fellows, like Lancaster, took their departure when their roles had been played."

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WANTED - GEMS: 313, 314, 315, 316, 319, 320, 321, 322, 356, 358, 359, 376, 385, 386, 387, 392, 457, 459, 493, 773, 881, 935, 946, 950, 951, 953, 954, 956, 965, 968, 970, 976, 977, 980, 984, 986, 989, 990, 992, 993, 998, 1116, 1126, 1129, 1133. MAGNETS: 45, 52, 134, 136, 138, 141, 195, 205, 238, 277, 318, 319, 325, 344, 346, 347, 353, 357, 358, 386, 388, 389, 400, 411, 417, 469, 717, 719, 752, 773, 809, 834, 850, 856, 858, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 868, 900, 921, 924, 925, 935, 936, 940, 942, 943, 944, 946, 948, 949, 950, 951, 954, 955, 958, 965, 967, 988, 996. POPULARS: 370, 385, 390, 393, 395, 398, 452, 455, 461, 466, 474, 475.

ERIC FAYNE, "EXCELSIOR HOUSE", GROVE ROAD, SURBITON, SURREY.

WANTED - Sexton Blake Libraries - 1st series: 11, 17, 37, 41, 105, 109, 111, 198, 201, 219; 2nd series: 293, 296, 306, 422, 474, 495, 520, 667; Boy's Friend Library - 1st series: 10, 68, 102, 105, 107, 165, 229, 246, 669; 2nd series: 396. Union Jack - 689, 690, 691, 693, 695, 702, 703, 704, 711, 721, 725, 727, 732, 733, 736, 740, 745, 746, 749, 751, 752, 1041, 1064, 1098, 1388, 1390.

MRS. J. PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE IN CONNECTION WITH "THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST" SHOULD NOW BE ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR, EXCELSIOR HOUSE, GROVE ROAD, SURBITON. Short articles and general items heartily welcomed.

WANTED: "The Autobiography of Frank Richards" in good condition. Send Offers to:

J. CHAMBERLAIN, 2 BRATHWAY ROAD, SOUTHFIELDS, S.W. 18.

EXCHANGE: Post-war Bunter and Merry books offered for Collectors' Digest Annuals 1947 - 50 and 1956; and Collectors' Digests 1 - 72 and 122.

PETER HANGER, 72 GLASGOW STREET, NORTHAMPTON.

# OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

## MIDLANDS

Report of Meeting held 26th October, 1959

The news of the sudden death of Herbert Leckenby cast a damper over this particular meeting. To us all he was a personal friend, and as the sad news came too late for any of us to make arrangements to be present at the funeral, we were more than glad that our Lady Chairman, Madge Corbett, had promptly made sure that a tribute from the Midland Club should be amongst the rest.

It was late in the evening before the twelve members present got down to what turned out to be an interesting programme. John Tomlinson obliged us with another of his interesting talks, and he outlined his eight selections of old boys' books which he would take on his "Desert Island." Not all Hamiltonian. He chose some other authors, in the main school yarns. Some we were familiar with, but from his description of those we did not know, they were of the highest standard.

There was no quiz or raffle, owing to shortage of time, but as a change from the ordinary there was a talk on the current boys' hero - perhaps the most well-known of them - Hopalong Cassidy of the Bar 20. There were 22 tales of this great character, 18 of them by Clarence E. Mulford and four by Tex Burns. I gave the talk, and emphasised the fact that these tales had been popular for over thirty years, and still were. I likened the yarns to those of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, for what was the Bar 20 outfit other than a western version of those famous knights?

The talk was much appreciated, and so was a similar talk by Jack Corbett. This was, as he termed it, "Frank Richards' Tramps." This talk on tramps brought in many personal opinions from the members present, and reference was made to the two books on "Tramps" by Jim Phelan.

An interesting night's programme, even if we ourselves "tramped" along an unusual road for once.

Next meeting, November 30th - George Chatham's Film Show, by the  
HARRY BROSTER - Secretary.

## MERSEYSIDE

Sunday, 8th November, 1959

Inclement weather - and sickness - brought the November meeting down to a minimum of members present. This is not very satisfactory,

and we hope that each and every member will make a special point of getting along to the December meeting.

We opened with a well-deserved tribute to the memory of Herbert Leckenby, whose death was a great shock to all of us at Merseyside. It was only a few months ago since he was with us at a meeting, telling us of his plans for the future. Rest in peace, Herbert. Our best wishes go out to Eric Fayne, who will be taking over where Herbert left off.

Final discussion of the Greyfriars Cup Competition took place. All individual entries have now been completed.

After the tea interval, we settled down to Bill Windsor's musical quiz. Records, both light and classical, were played, and we were asked questions relating to the artists and composers. This was won by Jim Walsh with fifty points, with Mrs. Webster second with forty-three.

Next meeting, which will be an informal Christmas gathering, will be on Sunday, 6th December, at 6.30 p.m. sharp.

NORMAN PRAGNELL - Secretary, Merseyside O.B.B.C.

#### NORTHERN

Meeting at 239, Hyde Park Road, Leeds. 14th November, 1959

The meeting started on a very sad note, because of the loss of our founder, Herbert Leckenby.

All the members stood in silence for a short time, in memory of Herbert. Chairman Bill Williamson paid a tribute, and Gerry Allison read out from a large number of letters he had received. Herbert will be missed, especially at Leeds, and he will never be forgotten.

A letter from the new editor of the C.D. was read, and Eric was assured of any help he might need, from the Northern Section.

The Christmas Party was discussed, and it was decided to have the tea in the Club room again.

J. Breeze Bently then took the chair, and fifteen members settled down to hear Breeze's Annual talk. This year's was entitled "The Todds" and was well up to the usual high standard we have come to expect from him. We had the arrival of Peter Todd at Greyfriars, Peter trying to make study No. 7 the top study of the Remove, Uncle Benjamin coming to Greyfriars, and various other episodes - all illustrated with readings from Red Magnets. Chuckles and chortles came from all round the room.

A break for refreshments - and then a continuation. Before we realised it, the clock had crept round to a quarter past nine, and, as Breeze Bently finished he was acclaimed by a hearty round of applause. Then, reluctantly, we all began to make our ways home.

December 12th is the Christmas Party, commencing 4.30 p.m.  
R. HODGSON - Hon. Secretary.

LONDON

The third meeting of the Michaelmas term took place at a new venue, the residence of Reuben Godsave at Leytonstone. The thoroughly enjoyable meeting was attended by 22 members.

Suitable tributes were paid to the memory of our late Vice-President, Herbert Leckenby.

Very good progress was reported by both the Hamiltonian and Nelson Lee librarians. Eric Fayne addressed the gathering, and told members about the future of the C.D. and also about the forthcoming party of members and friends which is being arranged to visit the Victoria Palace on January 2nd, for a performance of "Billy Bunter Flies East."

Roger Jenkins rendered a passage from Magnet 1141, "Bunter Comes to Stay" - an issue of the Courtfield Cracksman series. Don Webster's "Greyfriars Remove Study Occupants Quiz" was won by Millicent Lyle, Bob Whiter's Quiz by Roger Jenkins, the Eliminator by Bob Whiter, while the five winners of Eric Fayne's "Totto" were Roger Jenkins, Bob Blythe, Don Webster, Len Packman and George Sewell.

Len Packman read a couple of passages from our Herbert's "Old Boys' Books", and Bob Blythe reported that the Magnet Bibliography would probably be issued next February. So, with Don Webster proposing a hearty vote of thanks to the hosts, Reuben and Mrs. Godsave, the meeting terminated. Next meeting at 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22. Kindly notify Bob Whiter if you intend to be present. UNCLE BENJAMIN.

AUSTRALIA

THE GOLDEN HOURS CLUB

AUSTRALIA

Meeting held at Cahill's Restaurant on Friday, November 6th

When the members met at 6 p.m. it was obvious that they were not their usual bright enthusiastic selves. The sad news of Mr. Leckenby's death had been made known to his Australian friends and had reached us several weeks ago, thanks to the thoughtfulness of Ron Hodgson, Len Packman and Ben Whiter. But as the letters from the English clubs were passed around each had some glowing tribute to pay to this very wonderful friend, and we here in Australia, although we had never had the pleasure of meeting him, found we could talk of him as did his friends in England. Despite the distance between, our friendship had been very real and very close. Herbert gave much happiness to us all, and all the collectors owe to him a debt that can never be fully paid.

The news that Herbert himself had chosen a successor pleased the members, and when a letter from Eric Fayne himself was read, they all agreed that Herbert, as expected, had made an excellent choice. The members send their best wishes for your difficult task ahead, and assure you, Eric, that they will give to you the same support as they accorded Herbert.

Arrangements have now been completed to borrow a tape-recording machine to play back the greetings sent to us from the folk at Merseyside. All being well, a special meeting will be held on Sunday, 6th December at the home of the Secretary to share in this eagerly awaited treat.

Details of the Christmas Party were then discussed and Friday, December 18th, chosen as the night for this happy event. Our two parties have been most successful and it is hoped this will prove even more so.

The rest of the evening was spent arranging book exchanges and perusing the most interesting copies of the Midland Newsletter from our good friends Harry Broster and Co. B. PATE - Secretary.

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## Nelson Lee Column

Mr. JACK WOOD writes that, in order that more space can be devoted to Tributes to our late Editor, he has decided to hold over the Nelson Lee Column until the next issue of the Collectors' Digest.

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### OPINIONS, PLEASE

#### No. 1

Chas Churchill writes: "The later Nelson Lees were, on the whole, spoiled by too much Handforth. In fact, the Nelson Lee Library should have been called "Handforth's Weekly", as has been suggested by others."

Have you any views on the above opinion? If you have, jot them down, keeping them short and snappy, and post to the Editor.

\* \* \* \* \*

KEEP THEM GOING!

Elsewhere in this issue, we point out that few of the heroes of our youth are remaining to us, and we urge readers to support, with all their might and main, those which, happily, are still with us.

On these grounds, we have asked you to support the Billy Bunter show at the Victoria Palace.

On the same grounds we remind you that the Sexton Blake Library is still appearing, two issues each month. If you like detective fiction, you will enjoy them. But, in any case, it is up to all of us to do out little bit to make sure that a name which we saw on the book-stalls years ago is never crowded off. The Libraries cost only 1/- each - the magazine section alone is worth the bob.

Buy the Libraries each month, and, if you like, give them to a young acquaintance. He will think you a grand fellow. If a Church bazaar is coming along, which you usually support, give them a dozen copies of the latest Blake for the stalls. Slip a copy in the parcel you are packing for Nephew William or Uncle Fred. Don't be ashamed to show the cover of the S.B.L. as you ride on a bus - it is good advertising, and we are not ashamed of our love for the old papers.

If your newsagent doesn't stock them, persuade him to experiment with some, and display them in his window or on his counter. They will sell all right.

It's UP TO US TO KEEP OUR HEROES ALIVE!

\* \* \* \* \*

ODDS & ENDS

By Gerry Allison

Under the heading "Billy Bunter Bagged" the following appeared in a recent copy of the Dublin Evening Mail:

"Listening to 'Back to School', I was reminded of a funny incident that occurred a month ago. My schooldays included the era of the 'Magnet', 'Gem', 'Popular' and a host of others. We read them in and out of lessons, and there was many a sad heart if they were confiscated by a master.

A few years ago, Frank Richards revived his Billy Bunter series in book form. The 'funny incident' occurred while I was changing a book in the public library. I noticed, in the 'returns' section, one of these editions of Billy Bunter, and, with true schoolboy cunning, asked the assistant if it would be in order to get a book on my own ticket for a nephew who was stopping with me. She agreed, and so,

pointing casually to Billy, I remarked 'I think that one would do.' But no, it was not to be. The assistant gave me a this-is-where-you-get-yours kind of smile, and advised me to try the shelves. 'Because' said she, 'I'm afraid this book is reserved. You see, all Frank Richards' books have a long waiting list!'

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#### INSPIRED COMMENT

Extract from a letter from a postal member of the Club, who incidentally, does not take the Digest, and who has not read any of Bill Lofts' recent articles on G. R. Samways:-

"The mags were a most entertaining bunch - the genuine ones for the stories, the subs for other reasons. No. 424 (Magnet) is the earliest I have seen that I feel confident can be pinned down to Samways. The fantastic situations, snatches of verse, ridiculously opprobrious epithets bandied about even by the staff, and the odd way in which he simply drops a scene after lashing it to the point when the characters could not let it drop (c.f. Burrell's treatment of Quelch) make one wonder why the editor accepted them. They were pals, no doubt, but it is love, not friendship, that is supposed to be blind.

Pentelow gets himself horribly involved in the 'Spring' stories, which are a pretty good example of his habit of dragging in characters until his cast is about five times as big as necessary to carry the story along. Why? Is it a clumsy, because too-extended, use of the C.H. atmosphere-building technique, or is it, as sometimes appears in the Greyfriars Gallery, that he just had to be the universal know-all? Anyway, he stood head and shoulders above Samways, and most of his stories are acceptable, if not distinguished."

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#### NOTICE TO LITERARY CONTRIBUTORS AND ADVERTISERS

Owing to the C.D. now being edited in the South and printed in the North, the preparation of issues will have to be completed earlier in the month. It will be appreciated if items are sent to reach the Editor not later than the middle of the month, if intended for subsequent issue.

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