

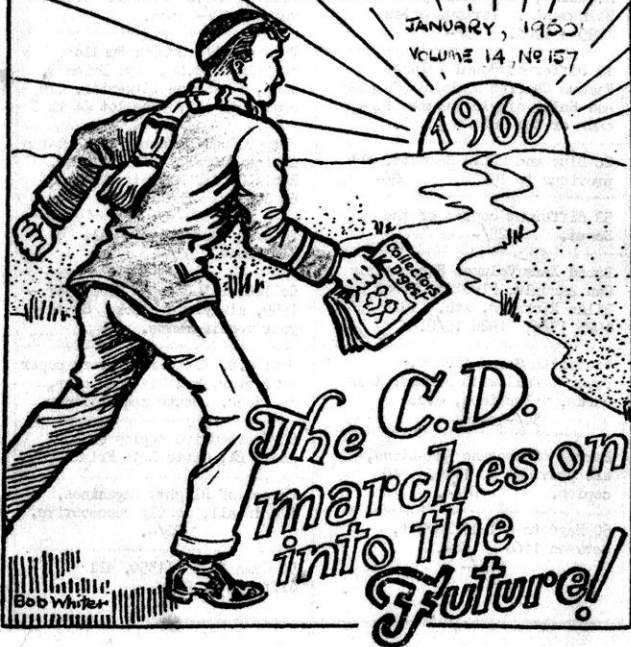
# COLLECTORS' DIGEST

1/6

JANUARY, 1960

VOLUME 14, No 157

1960



The C.D.  
marches on  
into the  
Future!

Bob Whiter

# BILL MARTIN

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# The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 14. No. 157

Price 1s. 6d.

JANUARY, 1960

Editor:

ERIC PAYNE  
Excelsior House,  
Grove Road,  
Surbiton, Surrey.

\* \* \* \* \*

## *From the Editor's Chair*



FEAT OF ENDURANCE. The Annual was out on time - and looking back on it now, it seems almost a miracle that it was. Only a few of us - those behind the scenes - know the frantic anxiety which lasted so long, and the amalgam of blood, sweat and tears that went into the production of the 1959 Annual.

Our Agency had given November 21st as the ceiling date for commencement of printing if the publication was to be ready for Christmas. But it was not until December 10th that I was in a position to give, rather dubiously, the signal to "go ahead."

Immediately, with astounding efficiency, the Agency swung in-

to action. Mr. Gore-Browne and his superlative staff worked throughout that anxious week-end, sticking at it far into the night every night. Who said something about a 40-hour week? They've never heard of it in York. Every day, a progress report came through to me, either by post or by telephone. Late on the Monday night, Mr. Gore-

Browne's voice, sounding more dead than alive, came over the wires: "It's finished. There's only the binding to do now."

A wonderful job. A terrific feat of endurance. Thank you, York Duplicating Services.

Best of all, it's a wonderful Annual. How proud of it Herbert would have been.

GREYFRIARS CUP. Hearty congratulations to the Northern Club for winning the Cup. A splendid piece of news, which delighted us at this Office. In three successive years, the trophy has been carried off by three different Clubs, showing how well spread over the entire O.B.B.C. is the knowledge, the gift of writing, and the know-how.

We shall hope to publish some of the various items entered in the contest in future issues of this paper.

OUR WONDER BOY. What a grand job Bob Whiter made of the cover of our Memorial Number to Herbert! It could not have been bettered. What a worker he is - and what a grand fellow! Down through the years he has been turning out his remarkably fine sketches which have added so much to the prestige of the C.D.

I find that I have only to give him the merest out-line of what I want for a cover picture - and Bob is on to it like a dog on a bone. In next to no time, it's there on my desk. We have some magnificent covers on the way.

Loyal, unostentatious, unselfish - that's Bob!

LINK WITH AUSTRALIA. Congratulations to the Merseyside Club, who had the brilliant idea of sending out messages on a tape-recording to our friends "down under." Elsewhere in this issue, Bette Pate tells of the exciting time they had in Australia when the tape was played over. It's one up for Merseyside. Initiative like this makes the world go round.

FAREWELL TO A FINE MAN. Throughout December, glowing tributes to Herbert have continued to flow in to this office. It is impossible for us to print them, but we thank the writers most sincerely. We thank, too, the many scores who sent us nice messages concerning our Memorial Number to Herbert, and we are indebted to the large number who have sent us words of encouragement for the future.

*The Editor*

# Nelson Lee Column

(Conducted by JACK WOOD, 328 Stockton Lane, York.)



As we begin a New Year, may I take this opportunity of wishing all my readers, whether they be Nelson Lee fans or not, a Happy and Prosperous New Year, coupled with the hope that they all spent a very Merry Christmas.

Secondly, I would like to thank

all those who have written to me since the death of Herbert Leckenby, especially those who so obviously appreciated what had to go on behind the scenes in getting the C.D. and the Annual out reasonably on time. Our new Editor had a hard task working from a distance, and I would like to join him in expressing on behalf of all of us our warmest congratulations to the Duplicating Agency for the enormous amount of work they put in to ensure that "the show must go on."

And now, what of the future? I have felt for some time that the response from the majority of Leeites to the needs of this Column is just not good enough. My increasing responsibilities at work make it more and more difficult to find the time I would like to devote to the monthly articles, and but for the regular gossip from our roving correspondent at St. Frank's, Jim Cook, over the last few years, there would probably have been no Column at all long ago. I hope he will continue his articles.

Correspondents of Herbert have complained of the Column being dull; yet no one has written to me saying so, offering any criticism, or - with a few exceptions - providing any new ideas or articles. Jim Cook and I, more often the former, have done our best to try to make the Column different, and, without guidance from fellow Leeites, it has been an uphill task.

I would add, however, that most of the criticism to Herbert seems to have come from Hamiltonians and Blake fans, so perhaps Leeites, for whom the Column is intended primarily anyway, are satisfied. Our new Editor tells me, however, that he is anxious to see that the Lee fans are as well catered for as other sections of the hobby, so do let me have plenty of copy early, in order that Eric Fayne can plot his pages in good time and give us a good show.

A short article by Tony Glynn herewith may set the ball rolling for improvement in 1960; let's hope so, because I'm sure that Leeites have plenty to say on their favourite topic.

\* \* \* \* \*

### LOOKING BACK

by

Tony Glynn

In the summer of 1954, I attended a science-fiction convention held at the Grosvenor Hotel, Manchester. In addition to many science-fiction fans gathered there, the occasion was graced by a number of authors of science-fiction novels and stories. Among them was a Manchester born author, Mr. John Russell Fearn.

For many years, Mr. Fearn has turned out first class science-fiction and western stories under his own name and under many pseudonyms.

In the course of the convention, several well-known writers of science-fiction - including Mr. Fearn - were gathered together on the platform for the express purpose of answering questions put to them by the audience. When the question "who is your favourite author" was posed, Mr. Fearn stood up and said that, when it came to Authors who specialised in juvenile writing, he plumped for Edwy Searles Brooks. From the body of the hall, I cried: "Hear, hear!"

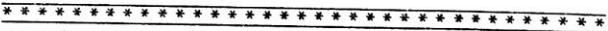
Later, when I increased my collection of "N.L.Ls" I discovered why Mr. Fearn has been so full of praise for the author of the St. Frank's stories - and those of you who have No. 126 (New Series) among your collections will also see why by turning to page 36. This is the page containing the "Between Ourselves" feature. There, opposite the photo of E. S. Brooks, you will see the photo of a young man who was later to become a successful author and under it you may read the name - John Fearn!

That was back in 1928, which brings to me a question that has been on my mind for some time. What has happened to those dozens of N.L.L. readers who wrote to E. S. Brooks so regularly and whose names were always cropping up in the "Between Ourselves" columns?

From the 1928 and 1929 period, for instance, there were Stanley Cubin, Reg. T. Staples, James W. Cook, Joan M. Wearing (of my home city of Manchester); Rosina Carini, of Thorpe Bay, who revealed that she was an Italian and prompted E. S. Brooks into deciding not to introduce an Italian villain into his stories; Tom Bryan, who appeared on the "Between Ourselves" page wearing a bowler and a butterfly collar, and many, many more. I realise that 1928 and '29 are thirty years and a whole great war away and many things must have happened to the faithful readers of those days since their names appeared in the N.L.L., but those who survive would probably enjoy entering into the activities of the "Nelson Lee Column" in the C.D. I wonder if this will be seen by any of them.

By the way, Edwy Searles Brooks must have been the most obliging of all the boys' writers of the Amalgamated Press. Readers were always writing in to say they were in need of back numbers. In New Series 147 of the "Old Paper" - dated February 23rd, 1929 - Brooks listed no less than eight numbers which he was seeking himself because he had been too generous in supplying readers at the expense of his own collection!

(What a pity E. S. B. doesn't want to talk these days about his early writings. - J. P. W.)



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# BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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



Ring in the NEW

I hope all my readers had an enjoyable Christmas and that those of you who had time to read the Sexton Blake Circle feature in the C.D. Annual found it to your satisfaction.

And now for something which will please you all. I am happy to announce another "scoop", one of such a nature as to beat anything that has yet appeared in the pages of Blakiana. You will undoubtedly guess who has a hand in this, the opening part of which will appear next month, but until then I will keep you guessing as to the enlightening revelations.

Finally, I extend every good wish to you all for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year - particularly to Eric Fayne to whom we owe so much for the continuance of the magazine, and to Mr. Gore-Browne of the Agency, without whose co-operation and personal help during the chaotic period immediately following the death of Herbert Leckenby, the continuity of the C.D. would have been doubtful.

JOSIE PACKMAN

\* \* \* \* \*

CENTURY-MAKERS

(And a few other interesting statistics)

By WALTER WEBB

INSTALMENT TEN

A VETERAN'S FAREWELL



What a pleasant duty it is to reach the year 1928 and be able to introduce an author who is not only still with us at the time of writing - 31 years later - but is still contributing Sexton Blake stories. Born in 1904, in Poona, India, the 24 year old (73) REX HARDINGE wrote his first Blake story in South Africa whilst living and working on an orange estate in the Transvaal, and what a refreshingly original novel that turned out to be. It started the author on a long career of Blake contributions and earned him well-merited popularity, and there is no disputing the fact that when he took over Lobangu and "Spots" Losely for a time the stories he wrote of those fine characters far eclipsed anything Cecil Hayter had done previously.

Just after Rex Hardinge's debut in January that remarkable veteran, W. Murray Graydon, had his hundredth S.B.L. novel published and so became the first author to accomplish the "double" - namely 100 stories of Blake in both the U.J. and S.B.L. A fine achievement, which at that time looked as though it would never be equalled, for no other author had even reached the fifty mark where the Library was concerned; Allan Blair being the nearest with 46, but he was not in the running for the double since his U.J. stories were so very few and destined not to be improved upon; whilst Teed with 35 had still a very long way to go to be even considered as a possible let alone a probable candidate for that honour.

The end of the year was noteworthy by reason of the fact that Graydon saw his 250th story published, whilst a new name - that of Gwyn Evans - was to be seen in the record table for the first time by reason of the accomplishment of 50 stories, mostly for the U.J. Principal records up to this time are as follows:

W. Murray Graydon (250); G. H. Teed (210); Mark Osborne and Robert Murray (82); E. S. Brooks (67); Gilbert Chester (66); Allan Blair (65); Anthony Skene (57); Lewis Jackson (56); Gwyn Evans (50).

Quite a distinguished debutante was next on the list, for May 1929 saw the first published Blake story by a retired Indian Army officer, who, at the age of 33, was still a comparatively young man. (74) MAJOR REGINALD FRANK FOSTER was born 13th April, 1896 in Portsmouth, contributed to a wide range of adult and juvenile publications, and, having seen war service out East, wrote fluently on subjects appertaining to some of the countries which made up that section of the globe. Walking, philosophy and gardening were his principal forms of recreation, which, to a certain extent, had to be sacrificed when during the national crisis of 1939-45 he returned to the army. In December, 1941, after sustaining an injury, he was posted to the

Queen's Royal Regiment, being invalided out of the army exactly three years later. He wrote his autobiography in 1938.

The only other newcomers during 1929 were (75) WILFRED TREMELLIN who, as far as is known, only contributed a single Blake story, and that well-known lecturer and world-traveller (76) WILLIAM EDWARD STANTON-HOPE. Born in 1889, in London, Stanton-Hope joined the Harmsworths in 1904, and was with the A.P. from 1913 to 1925, so it is possible that he contributed in the earlier anonymous days, in which case he would have been entitled to an earlier introduction, of course. Travelling all over the world, he recorded his adventures in a travel-autobiography published in London and New York entitled "Rolling Round the World for Fun." During the last war he did a great deal of naval features work for the London "Evening News" and was also afloat with the Royal Navy on behalf of his old friend Sir John Hammerton for whose wartime and other fortnightly publications he wrote extensively. An earlier work, "Richer Dust," a novel on the Gallipoli campaign was publicly commended by Winston Churchill.

The years 1930 and 1931 are tinged with a little sadness, for two well-known personalities of the A.P. departed at this period. In the former case it was due to a feeling that the time had come to give the writing game best and enjoy the remaining few years left to him in ease and relaxation; in the second case the going was of a more definite nature.

In 1930, when the Sexton Blake stories were credited with their authors' names for the first time - a policy which has been adhered to ever since - William Murray Graydon, after a long and meritorious career confined almost entirely to the writing of Sexton Blake stories alone, gave up the ghost, and withdrew unobtrusively into well-deserved retirement. 1904 - 1930 was the period of service Graydon gave, and as one of the principal members of the "revival" series in the early 1900's he can claim a large share of the credit for the growing popularity of the detective from those early days. An editor who knew Graydon up to his retirement recalls that the old chap was beginning to show visible signs of the long years he had spent over a typewriter, for ascerbity and taciturnity were traits which revealed themselves with increasing frequency as departed inspiration, advanced years and waning enthusiasm collaborated to result in a decision which, though regrettable in view of his long association with Sexton Blake, was a wise one, for the veteran was all too obviously past his best and not relishing in the least the rapid changes in writing technique which had occurred since his drafting into the authorship of the Blake stories some 26 years previously. Since he had taken the lead from Shaw Rae in the

winter of 1906, Murray Graydon had hung on to it right up to his retirement 24 years later - an outstanding achievement in view of the strong challenge of G. H. Teed, whose remorseless advance seemed to suggest that he was determined that his rival should not have the monopoly where personal records were concerned. At the time of his departure Murray Graydon's total of Blake stories stood at a minimum of 260; but with Teed only 22 behind it looked as though that figure would be easily beaten within the next few months, though the latter was likely to find the task of achieving the "double" a much more difficult one. At the end of 1930 he still had to write 41 more S.B.Ls, a task he would probably find beyond him, despite his extraordinary output.

What happened to W. Murray Graydon eventually? He is dead now of course, not being immortal; but how and when the end came is something I should very much like to know in view of what he did for the benefit of our perennial and popular character. It is claimed that he outlived his son Robert, so he must still have been alive in 1940, at which time his age would have been well into the 80's; as a matter of fact, it is known that on his retirement he went to Paris to live but when war broke out in 1939 he returned to London and his old hunting grounds, being seen in Fleet Street in 1940 by a fellow scribe. In view of the almost complete dearth of information concerning his journalistic activities, this quite inadequate recognition of his valuable support in the interests of Sexton Blake is all one can pay the veteran, though one will always remember him as the author who first introduced Mrs. Bardell and Pedro into the stories. But, looking up my records again, I find therein quite a warm tribute from an editor who knew and met Graydon frequently. He remarks: "Graydon.. a very cheery, likeable fellow and a terrific worker. Not a great or sound craftsman, but turned out many readable stories. Definitely not a "tripe" merchant as were some of the "best sellers." The sting in the tail prompts the query: Who were these best sellers the editor had in mind?

New writers continued to be enrolled for stories in both U.J. and S.B.L. in 1930. In March, someone of the name of (77) DAVIES made a first appearance in the S.B.L. - he may have been EDWARD C. DAVIES, who wrote for CHUMS - and then, in June, (78) LOUIS CHARLES DOUTHWAITE entered the ranks. A Yorkshireman by birth, he was born in Hull, he early in life set off for the North of Canada where he prospected for gold in the Hudson Bay area. He joined up in October 1914, and was fighting in Belgium and France throughout 1916 and 1917 with the Canadian contingent. A handsome and distinguished-looking

man, he was destined to write but very few Blake novels.

In the same month, also in the S.B.L. (79) ROBERT C. ELLIOTT made his first and only appearance. September saw another "hit and run" author (80) LEWIS ESSEX, and he was followed immediately by (81) FRANCIS WARWICK, son of the well-known novelist Sidney Warwick, whose earliest work appeared in the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. U.J. between 1898 - 1902 during which time he contributed about a dozen stories. The sixth and last newcomer to emerge into the ranks that year was (82) DAVID MAC LUIRE of whose antecedents nothing is known. He was destined to write only four Blake novels.

The end of the year saw the totals of the leading authors as follows: W. Murray Graydon (260); G. H. Teed (238); Robert Murray (94); Mark Osborne (85); Gilbert Chester (83); Anthony Skene (82); Allan Blair (77); E. S. Brooks (74); Gwyn Evans (71); Coutts Brisbane (61); Lewis Jackson (56).

As will be seen, the name of Coutts Brisbane enters the records for the first time, the reward of nine years' endeavour in the cause of Sexton Blake. And that other well-known personality to whom reference was made earlier on? Well, this must be held over until the following episode.

\* \* \* \* \*

### QUAINT UTTERANCES FROM THE MAN AT THE WHEEL

By Victor Colby

Herewith are some of the interesting remarks made by "The Skipper" to his readers in the early 1d. "Union Jack's" in 1904, which, although reading quaintly today, did at least promote a nice intimate atmosphere.

#### KNOCK-KNEES (U.J. No. 6):

J. J. is distressed because his legs are not quite straight, and asks me for a remedy for knock-knees. If the trouble is very pronounced, I am afraid a surgical operation would be necessary. If, however, the legs are only slightly crooked, the following may effect a cure:- When going to bed take a thin book, roll it round with flannel and place it between the knees, binding the knees tightly round with a cloth. Bind the ankles also. This will force the knees outward and gradually straighten the legs.

#### HE WANTS A MOUSTACHE (U.J. No. 6):

L.O.P. tells me that although he has reached the mature age of twenty, so far few signs of hirsute growth have made their appearance on his lip. Because of the absence of a moustache he is often mistaken

for a mere boy. Can I tell him of anything that will promote the growth of a moustache? My correspondent might try rubbing the following lotion on his upper lip and watch the result:- Tincture of Ceantharides, two drachms; sal volatile, four drachms; expressed oil of mace, three drachms; oil of sweet almonds, one ounce; rosewater to six ounces.

Then followed advice on making invisible ink, keeping rabbits, getting up early, joining the army, and then, in U.J. No. 29, the problem of blushing.

#### A GOOD BLUSHING MIXTURE:

My advice to those who suffer from the painful habit of blushing is to take plenty of fresh air and exercise and not to shun the society of other people. If the nerves are weak, iron tonics will help. Ten grains of quinine, two drachms of phosphoric acid diluted in six ounces of water makes a good nerve tonic and blushing mixture. Any chemist will make up this prescription for 4d.

#### THE ROAD TO SUCCESS (U.J. No. 38):

Boys, my advice to you is - have a definite aim in life, work hard, don't shirk any duty. If at first you don't succeed, try again. Keep your definite object always in view, aim high, work when you work, and play when you play, and when - yes, I will say it - and when you want a nice quiet rest and a little recreation after a hard day's work read THE UNION JACK.

(I wonder how many readers followed the advice of The Skipper and profited (?) thereby? J. P.)

\* \* \* \* \*

S.B.L. REVIEWS  
NOVEMBER, 1959

#### KILLER'S PLAYGROUND (No. 439).....EDWIN HARRISON

Sexton Blake, Paula Dane and Splash Kirby in Cannes at the time of the opening of the now famous Film Festival. A scintillating background against which one would naturally expect a story a little out of the ordinary. Yet, I suppose, that is true in this case, but in the sense hardly complimentary to either author or publishers, for, without doubt, due to its slothof movement, and its resultant dullness, this is one of the best sleep-inducing novels yet produced in the New Order.

Winding up a few days' holiday in the Riviera town, Blake and Paula, leaving a cafe late one night, see a young Italian murdered by two men. The story simply describes Blake's activities when he sets about the task of hounding down the murderers, and it's not enough to inspire interest let alone maintain it. Edwin Harrison has done and can do much better than this.

Rating.....Moderate

\* \* \*

FEAR IS MY SHADOW (No. 440)

MARTIN THOMAS

In the author's previous novel Sexton Blake caught a tiger. It's the turn of its mate to share a similar fate in this one. Having been assigned to write an article on the new revue at the Mirage Music Hall for his Round and About Column in the "Daily Post," Splash Kirby induces a reluctant Blake to accompany him to the show in which the major attraction is La Vivienne, a glamorous performer of the strip business, who exposes her shapely contours twice nightly in a series of undraped poses. The mysterious murder of Jimmy Gray, the resident comedian, brings our old friend from the yard, Chief Inspector Coutts, on the scene, and old memories are sharpened when he and Blake co-operate to expose the killer.

As in his five previous novels, the author successfully creates an atmosphere of conviction and readers will thrill to his description of Blake's summing-up of the whole affair. In Blake circles there's another name for consistency - it's Thomas.

Rating.....Very Good

WALTER WEBB.

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OPINIONS PLEASE! No. 2

FRANK LAY writes: "...P. G. Wodehouse's school stories are only just about readable today...."

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

\* \* \*

GOOD LUCK

The branches of the O.B.B.C. (including Australia) sent telegrams of good wishes to Billy Bunter and Co. on the opening day of the show at the Victoria Palace.

# HAMILTONIANA



## THE REV. HARRY WHARTON

John Stokes of Dublin sends us a cutting from a religious newspaper, published in Ireland. It announces a Protestant Crusade led by the Rev. Harry Wharton. The headquarters of the movement are in Richmond Road, Kingston-on-Thames.

John says in his letter: "We thought you would be interested to know what became of Harry Wharton. We always thought that he would join H.M.'s army, didn't we?"

## ECHO FROM AFAR

Lady Archer-Shee died recently in New York. Her husband was the older brother of George Archer-Shee, the Osborne cadet wrongly dismissed from the naval college on an accusation that he stole a 5/- postal-order. In 1908 the boy's father instructed Sir Edward Carson to proceed against the Admiralty to clear George's name. Despite official apathy and obstruction, this was achieved. It was a case that aroused the nation.

Terence Rattigan took the story and made it into *The Winslow Boy*, but of greater interest to us is that Frank Richards based a fine story on the affair, in a *Red Cover Magnet*; in that story, Bob Cherry was accused of the theft, and Major Cherry fought for his son's honour.

## "BILLY BUNTER FLIES EAST"

The most striking feature of the new Billy Bunter play at the Victoria Palace is how well it is acted. Players, in a production of this type, could so easily spoil it by over-acting. Neither apathy nor over-acting are allowed to rear their fearsome heads in "Billy

Bunter Flies East" and the result is a credit to all concerned. Every member of the cast gets his teeth into his part, and all give sterling performances. The team-work is grand to see.

Gerald Campion, as always, is the perfect Bunter. His performance is amazing. John Downing and Alastair Speed, as Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry respectively, strike one at first as hailing from the Sixth form, but so well do they enter into the spirit of the thing that the Famous Five rapidly come to life as a bunch of high-spirited school-boys.

Michael Anthony and Aiden Turner, as the crooks of the piece, are fine, acting with commendable restraint yet convincing villainy. They do not put a foot wrong.

The story is slight, but the interest is sustained till the final curtain. The humorous situations are slick and well contrived, and they follow one another with a smoothness which is obviously the result of hard rehearsal. Particularly well done is the sequence where Bunter drinks the spirit intended for the stove, and causes brilliant pantomime-like explosions all over the stage.

The Victoria Palace is a large theatre, but the diction of the players is so good that they can be heard, without exception, from every seat in the house. Perhaps it is apt to say that the Gem line of the play is when Bob Cherry views the giant idol, and says: "It's as ugly as Herries' bulldog at St. Jim's."

The only point that made this critic click his tongue at the opening performance was that Hurree Singh wore a turban at school, and later on wore it in conjunction with his pyjamas. Even this may subsequently have been put into line.

Obviously aimed at the younger element, which is right and proper at this season of the year, "Billy Bunter Flies East" is a delightful entertainment for the young at heart from eight to eighty. The leering idol might startle those over eighty, though they would still be delighted with Billy Bunter's gastronomic performance.

A full report of the visit of the London Club in force on 2nd January, will appear in our next issue.

\* \* \* \* \*

DO YOU REMEMBER? - BY ROGER M. JENKINS

No. 34 - Magnet No. 789 - "Billy Bunter's Boat-Race Party."

Charles Hamilton did not often write a story with a topical interest. It is true that some of the earlier Gems and Magnets contained references to the Coronation of 1911 and descriptions of trips to



Exhibitions, but as a rule such engrossing items of the moment were excluded. It was just as well that this should have been, for topical stories rapidly lose their interest; Sunday's roast meat is not so interesting when it is Monday's cold joint or Tuesday's hash. Collectors can feel grateful that so many of the St. Jim's and Greyfriars stories eschewed topicality and dealt instead with human nature, a topic of more enduring interest. Nevertheless, it is said that it is the exception that proves the rule, and any Magnet collector will be willing to make an exception in favour of No. 789 of that paper.

Billy Bunter's boat-race party began in the usual way, with swank. In order to add verisimilitude to his boasts he made a spoof telephone call, to which he knew Skinner was listening. Whilst Skinner was suspicious, he was also gullible, and did not think that Bunter had sufficient cunning to hoodwink him. Moreover, he remembered how Mr. Bunter had once made some money on the Stock Exchange, and fivers had flowed like water for a brief time. (This episode was often alluded to in the early 'twenties, but the only story I can trace is the one specially written for the 1925 Holiday Annual, presumably after the date when Magnet No. 789 was written.) Another spoof telephone call to the Head completed Bunter's preparations, and the trap was set. There was no shortage of victims.

The trip proved to be a series of disappointments. The expected car could not be sent from Bunter Court, and it proved necessary to travel by train (someone else paying for Bunter). There was no car at the London terminus and so taxicabs were engaged to take them to the Bunter mansion on the Thames (Mr. Bunter to pay on arrival). The Bunter mansion could not be located, strangely enough, and the cab driver began to grow positively unpleasant as they toured Putney and Mortlake in search of a non-existent address. Finally, the inevitable storm broke.

Who won the 1923 boat-race? Not unnaturally that information is not given in Magnet No. 789, which went to press some weeks in advance of that epic event. But to satisfy the curious I have had recourse to Pears' Encyclopaedia, and the answer is - Oxford. It was many years before they were able to repeat their triumph; perhaps it was because they missed the encouraging shouts of the Greyfriars juniors who had been so vociferous in "Billy Bunter's Boat-Race Party."

\* \* \* \* \*

RESULT OF QUIZZLE NO. 13. Solution to Clue Down: "Christmas Dinner" Hidden words: "Snow was falling over Wayland Moor." First correct solution was received from Eric Lawrence, 10 Clarence Avenue, Sunbury-on-Thames, to whom 5/- has been sent.

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 views 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. 34. STRAWS IN THE WIND.

Is it possible, from an author's work, to arrive at a conclusion concerning his attitude to life, his beliefs, his ideals, his opinions on world affairs? Certainly it is not, from one work only. I was told once that Sutton Vane, the author of that most beautiful play "Outward Bound" was an atheist. If it is true, it shows plainly that a man can write with his tongue in his cheek.

If we did not know so much about Bernard Shaw, it would not be all that easy to pinpoint his beliefs with any certainty. In his plays he asks such questions as (a) Is character made by heredity or by environment? (b) Is a religious body justified in accepting, for the furtherance of its good works, money made from dubious sources? (c) If only one person can be cured of a desperate disease, which should be saved? - a dissolute artist who paints most beautiful pictures, or an inefficient general practitioner who is kind and good? Shaw asks many more questions of this type, but he does not show his own opinion as to what the answers should be.

But a playwright, whose use of words is limited, is in a different category from the story-writer, who when he writes millions of words, cannot help but give us a glimpse into his own soul.

In the work of Charles Hamilton, what emerges the most vividly is his intense pride in being British. Was that why, a few years ago, a pompous reviewer in a daily paper referred to "Frank Richards' old-fashioned school stories"? If so, thank God there are a few old-fashioned people left to give a bit of backbone to the country in these cynical, X-certificate days.

No one could doubt Mr. Hamilton's loyalty and affection for the Crown, his deep respect and love for yesterday's Empire and today's Commonwealth, his belief in good breeding. And, though the stories have never preached, their high moral tone has been a sure pointer to the hard religious core which the writer possesses.

Do you recall these hilarious gems, which tickled us to death in the Hollywood series? Coker, speaking of the United States, said: "I've heard of Independence Day. You fellows may hardly believe it, but the Americans celebrate the day they were bunked out of the British

Empire. I could understand its being celebrated on this side; but celebrating it over there beats me."

And then, still with Coker: "They're a Republic, and proud of it - like a man being proud of a black eye or a broken nose."

The voice was the voice of Coker, but the words were the words of Frank Richards.

Do you remember Mr. Vernon-Smith, talking to the boys in that 1927 South Seas series? He said: "Nine people in ten don't know that the rubber plantations would never have existed at all, but for British enterprise....British enterprise did it, but forgot to talk about it. If the Americans had done it, they would be telling the world at the top of their voices....What was American push-and-go doing, while British enterprise was getting to work?"

Americans were never shown to much advantage in any of the Hamilton stories. The character and antics of Fisher T. Fish are too well known for me to need to dwell on them here. The Hollywood series, which I have always found a delight, was a gigantic chuckle at the expense of the States. Years later, Putnam Van Duck was a reasonably attractive youngster, but the whole series was a tilt at the American way of life.

The Hollywood series was a joy, because it was so packed with clever irony and delicious humour; the Van Duck series misfired because it was too full of slapstick and farce.

A decent American citizen appeared in the Black Box series in the Gen's last autumn, but he was a rarity in Hamiltonia.

Europeans were seldom presented in a very attractive light. In the early Magnet, Ionides, the Greek, was effeminate and vicious; in the later Magnet, Kazilelos, the Greek, pursued the path of villainy. Kern Gunten, of Cedar Creek, was a rascally Swiss, and he was not the only "rascally Swiss" down the years. The Dutch sent us Mr. Brander and Otto Van Tromp, and I can recall no Dutchman in the stories who reflected credit on his native land. Spaniards were invariably treacherous, the Germans were rather a sorry lot, the Portuguese were a mixed bag. Frenchman were seldom villains, but they were usually objects of fun.

We find the people of the Far East depicted far more sympathetically. True, that part of the world provided its cut-throats and scoundrels, but there were many delightful characters from China.

Coloured people show up happily in the Hamilton story, but not half-castes. Perhaps one could infer that Mr. Richards would have no patience at all with anything so stupid as the colour bar, but would be doubtful of the wisdom of mixed marriages.

Colonials, as they used to be called, were invariably splendid characters, Though, with the possible exception of Wildrake (and, of course, excepting Hurree Singh), they never starred in the most outstanding series, they were the cream of the earth.

Finally, wealth did not make a gentleman, but good breeding did. On the one side we had Gussy and Lord Mauleverer, two of the most lovable characters ever created - wealthy, but gentlemen in the true sense of the world. On the other side, Racke, reeking with money, but utterly unpleasant, and the various temporary upstarts of the middle years who were equally loathesome, for another reason.

As we can safely assume that no man has written for over fifty years with his tongue in his cheek, I feel sure that we can glean many facts about Charles Hamilton himself in his finest stories.

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

\* \* \* \* \*

#### CONTROVERSIAL ECHOES

No. 32. THE GEM, THE MAGNET - and the SCHOOL STORY CLASSICS.

BASIL ADAM writes: "Like you, I thought that 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' was a much over-rated school story, yet I quite enjoyed the much maligned 'Eric' and 'St. Winifred's' by Dean Farrar. H. A. Vachell's 'The Hill' was rather a favourite of mine, too.

I do not think the age of the stiff-covered school story will ever return, in spite of the Bunter books. No modern boy, reading the Bunter books, can have any idea of the strength and power of Frank Richards' writing as shown in the 1925 Rebel series and in the Stacey series. Stiff-covered school stories simply cannot compete with Frank Richards' school series in the Magnet. He is supreme. I am afraid I must disagree with Mr. Samways on this point."

GEOFFREY WILDE writes: "The greatest difficulty of all in the idea of Greyfriars and St. Jim's in stiff covers is their length and scope. Much of Charles Hamilton's best could only be reprinted in some sort of bumper-annual format. But would it be impossible to conceive a start with some of the finest of the short 2 or 4 issue series? Several Magnet Christmasses must come immediately to mind, such Bunterisms as the hundred-pound boater, or Quelchy's watch-chain, and the Gem's Mysterious X or the mystery of Nobody's Study.

As the ideal medium for such projected reprints, I find my mind turning, in a sort of rosy trance, to the first, best, and most virile and enterprising of all the reprint organisations - Penguin Books.

We've had the Penguin Shakespeare, Shaw, Homer and Dostoevsky; the Penguin Jeeves and Penguin science-fiction; Penguin Edgar Wallace and Peter Cheyney. Why not Penguin Bunter?

I wonder. Am I being impossibly ambitious?"

FRANK LAY writes: "I was amused to see you sticking your neck out over 'Plummy'. I could not agree with you less. With the exception of Psmith, Wodehouse's school stories are only just about readable today, and I think are only in demand because of his great popularity. And Psmith was, of course, the stepping-stone from school stories to adult fiction.

Wodehouse rather brings out one of the other points of discussion. He was described, on a famous occasion, by Hilaire Belloc as 'the greatest living master of English' and, if my memory serves me rightly, this was at a ceremony at Oxford University when he received an honorary degree of Doctor for his services to English literature. Yet there are many who find him boring and unreadable.

Take Edwy Searles Brooks - one seems either to revel in him or one just can't be bothered. In other words, no one writer can appeal to everyone. A good story can appeal, even if badly written, but would appeal more if well written, and any piece of writing should have something to say. Many sub-writers had nothing to say. They merely filled up space.

I do not altogether go with you on the question of Hamilton's masterpieces. The Stacey series I would not place very high for various reasons, and the famous classic 'The Boy Without a Name' could easily be published in hard-cover form. The gift of characterisation does not require hundreds of thousands of words. In fact, too many words tend to have the opposite effect. Many of Hamilton's characters have, over the years, altered considerably. Even the redoubtable Bunter has a most inconsistent code of behaviour.

Later in your pages, reference is made to another author who, I venture to suggest, was even more prolific than Hamilton - namely, Frederick Faust, better known as Max Brand. He wrote mainly for the pulps, but hundreds of his stories reached hard cover form, and I would recommend your readers to purchase two Penguins recently published - 'Montana Rides' and 'The Song of the Whip', written under his pseudonym of Evan Evans. I believe these will be classics of the future. Here you will find superb characterisation that lifts these stories right out of the Western class, allied to quick action and brilliant writing."

DON WEBSTER writes: "There is much to be said in favour of those

bygone school tales which appeared in stiff covers. To many older readers they were the introduction to the Public Schools they were never able to attend.

The stories of Slapton School have many admirers, and Talbot Baines Reed's 'Master of the Shell' might well be Mr. Hacker on occasion. To me, 'St. Winifred's' by Dean Farrar, is reminiscent of 'The Boy without a Name' by Frank Richards, though I prefer the latter.

I know of one avid Hamiltonia fan who has now almost completed a collection of the earlier stiff-covered school stories by Hadath, Cleaver, Avery, etc.

Personally, I agree that only Frank Richards can really write a selling stiff-covered school story today.

BERT HOLMES writes: "I agree with you that none of the old stiff-cover writers came up to the Hamilton style for schoolboy reading. T. B. Read was good, admittedly, and some of the others. Personally, I like R. S. Goodyear."

\* \* \* \* \*

THE MAGNET & GEM AUTHORS LIST. AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT

By W. O. G. Lofts and Derek Adley

Despite very good progress in compiling our lists of actual writers of the 'Magnet' and 'Gem' yarns, it was not possible to complete our statistics in time for the C.D. Annual this year. We do, however, promise readers that the 'Magnet' list will appear in the C.D. Annual for 1960, and if not finally complete it will be as far as we have been able to compile.

Now it has been brought to our attention that many collectors have gained the wrong impression as to how exactly our statistics are being compiled, and we both feel that in our own interests the following facts should be known to the reader.

Several collectors have the idea that our lists are being prepared solely on the memory of Mr. Samways - which is far from being correct. Now it is true that Mr. Samways has very kindly given us tremendous help in identifying his own stories, but this is as far as he would be prepared to go from memory - as stated in the C.D. last year. He is also only prepared to state with any authority identification of any stories which he proof-read whilst in office on the 'Magnet' and 'Gem' staff during the period 1914 - 1921. Our data therefore, has been gleaned as follows:

1. Authorship of many tales has been obtained from official sources connected with the Amalgamated Press records - and in these cases there

cannot be the slightest doubt whatsoever that the authorship is correct.

2. Many of the substitute writers that we have contacted have documents in their possession to prove that they wrote certain stories in the 'Magnet' and 'Gem' - indeed many of them not only have carbon copies of their stories, but actual copies of the papers themselves obtained at the time of their publication.

3. It has been my very great privilege (W. O. G. Lofts) to have had an interview with Mr. C. M. Down, editor of the 'Magnet' and 'Gem' from 1921 to 1940, who actually was on the staff from the very first 'Magnet' until the last, 1908 to 1940. He has examined our list of substitute writers and stories and in his opinion it is remarkably accurate as far as he could remember.

Some readers have also taken the view that Mr. Samways' quotation that 'He defied anyone to tell who had written some of the clever imitations' was rather a tall statement - we would like to give some proof that his statement was quite correct by the following examples:

According to the John Shaw list the first substitute story published in the 'Gem' was No. 53 entitled 'D'Arcy Minors Chum' - this was quite true as being a substitute tale - for readers interested the author was H. Clarke Hook, son of the creator of Jack, Sam. and Pete. Now we can state with complete authority that No. 43 entitled 'The Schoolboy Jockey' assumed by Hamiltonian collectors as being a Charles Hamilton yarn, was in fact written by Mr. C. M. Down! He was in his early days quite a good substitute writer and in his youthful years, Mr. Down was also quite a good horserider and the theme of the story previously quoted was mainly about his favourite sport. No. 81 'The St. Jim's Motor Cyclist' again presumed to have been a Hamilton tale was also written by C. M. Down. He also took a great interest in motor cycling and actually had the distinction of riding in the T.T. races at the Isle of Man one year.

And as already stated, before the very first 'Magnet' story presumed to have been written by a substitute writer - probably because it was a poor tale - No. 85. 'The Greyfriars Visitors' was in fact written by Charles Hamilton.

On the basis of the above information we hope that readers will accept our lists as authentic when published. We also wish to state that it is not our intention to criticise the original list compiled by John Shaw, but we would like to draw readers attention to the fact that this list was based only on the writers' theories while our list is based on fact.

It was also on a suggestion of John Shaw's that we decided to produce this list mainly for the following reason. We feel that in the past where a story was merely classed as a substitute yarn, with no indication of the author concerned, all substitute stories fell into the same category. If, however, the author's name was appended to the story then substitute yarns could be more fairly judged on the individual authors' merits - thus the good could be pruned from the bad.

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ODDS AND ENDS  
By Gerry Allison

A HERBERT LECKENBY MEMORIAL. Some years ago I had a letter which ran, "We all owe so deep a debt to Herbert that I feel we should try to show this in some practical way. May I suggest the formation of a collection of the first issues of our favourite papers. This would be known as 'The Herbert Leckenby Collection of No. 1s.' To start the ball rolling, as it were, I am sending you copies of three No. 1s."

These were the first issues of 'The Boy's Realm' 1st and new series, (1902 and 1919). Also No. 1 of 'The Marvel' new series. Since then the Collection has received the first issue of 'The Thriller' and of 'Cheerio.'

Now that we have lost our beloved Herbert, I wonder if anyone else is interested in this suggestion. Such a collection could be held in rotation by the various branches of the O.B.B.C. and be borrowed by any of their members. This might be a way of ensuring that the memory of Herbert was kept green in a way he would truly appreciate.

THE RACEHORSE OF THE REMOVE! Did you see the recent news-item about a racehorse with the widely inappropriate name of Billy Bunter? There was a photograph of the animal coming to grief over a fence, and throwing its rider. It was probably carrying too much weight!

SWEENEY TODD. Enthusiasts of the old 'Bloods' will be interested to know that the tale of the Demon Barber reappears this month in two new versions. A musical opened at the Lyric, Hammersmith on December 10th, whilst the Royal Ballet are giving John Cranko's latest work "Sweeney Todd" at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon.

SMALL ADVERTISEMENTS. Small advertisements are accepted for publication in the C.D. at the rate of 1d. per word, serial numbers counting as half a word. Quotations can be given for full-page or half-page advertisements.

\* \* \* \* \*



QUIZZLE No. 14

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

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

The letters in the numbered squares, if placed in sequence in the lower grid, will spell out someone who seems to be a figure-puncher at Greyfriars.

GLUE DOWN: A. An occupation for half-holidays in the winter term.

CLUES ACROSS:

- A. Sounds as though they study vital statistics here.
- B. Pout, Len! Change for the Bounder.
- C. Lowther threw in - but missed the wicket. Sad!
- D. Bearful, according to Inky.
- E. Can the learner have rest first, before Quelch demonstrates with something on it?
- F. Mauleverer, slack in the grass.
- G. Stop, man! Have you brought Bunter's postal-order?
- H. Yaas, wathah!
- I. Is he still in his old haunts at St. Jim's?
- J. Dicky Nugent might be useful to eight in the Sixth.
- K. Study of Manners.

- L. Big Kangaroo, beheaded, could describe Mellish.
- M. He wrote about Harley.
- N. The Cedar Creek fellows might have spotted them.

\* \* \* \* \*

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.

\* \* \* \* \*

PRESS DAY. For various reasons, it has been found necessary to advance the Press Day of this paper. The latest date for the acceptance of advertisements is the 18th of the month. Secretaries and regular contributors are asked to submit their material as early in the month as possible, in order to aid production and prevent publication delays.

# T A P E D !

By Bette Pate

## Merseyside to Australia

Our friends on Merseyside made a tape-recording some time ago to send their greetings to our members. One Sunday in December we were able to gather at my home to listen in to their cheery messages.

One of our most enthusiastic members, Stan Nicholls, had arranged the loan of a tape recorder, and Syd Smyth, our Chairman, having mastered the intricacies of its operation, settled down to be master of ceremonies, and did a very nice job too.

The reception was very clear, and we were able to recognize quite a few old friends. I've been corresponding with Don Webster and Frank Unwin, so I was naturally pleased to hear them - felt they were right there chatting with us - really amazing how such a little thing like a spool of tape could bridge the distance between our two countries. And how wonderful to think that, for once, the wonders of science have been used to make friends instead of to destroy our enemies.

We were most interested in Frank Unwin's comments, and the fact that he had served with Australia in the last war gave him an insight into the nature of the Aussie characters. There I must agree with the author who wrote "They're a Weird Mob" - yes, we are, and our treatment of the English language isn't always very kind, but, according to Harry Steel, who visited here in 1955, there's nothing wrong with our hospitality and our cups of tea.

Naturally, the cricket commentary interested our enthusiasts, but we still think Bill Windsor was a very brave man to make the remarks he did about Aussie cricket. Our chaps are thinking up some sizzling replies to bowl him out with when we record our reply to our good friends of the Mersey.

What a grand bunch of chaps they sounded - and so full of enthusiasm! Jim Walsh did a grand job with the tape, and I would like to thank him for all the trouble taken to give us this treat. This warm spirit of fellowship amongst collectors is, I should imagine, the force which has sustained the clubs for so long.

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Magnets, S.O.Ls, Populars and Holiday Annuals. Send details with prices to:

K. F. KIRBY, WESLEY STREET, UMTATA, CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA.

# OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

## MIDLANDS

### Meeting held

30th November, 1959.



After arrangements had been settled for our Christmas meeting, December 21st, the twelve members, plus Mrs. Norman Gregory, tackled a quiz set by Madge Corbett - twenty questions on all subjects of the O.B.B.C., some very tricky. Tom Porter was the winner with 12 correct.

The library raffle was won by Madge. The third item was my own choice of Desert Island books. If I had a free choice, my list would be (1) "King Solomon's Mines" by Rider Haggard. (2) "Heritage of the Desert" by Zane Grey. (3) "Turning Wheels" by Stuart Cloeti. (4) "Heart of Unaga" by Ridgwell Cullum. (5) "Tinker's Pride" by Nigel Tranter. (6) "The Road to Nowhere" by Maurice Walsh. (7) "Hopalong Cassidy and the Eagles Brood" by Clarence E. Mulford. (8) "The House in the Hills" by Olive Fitzroy.

But to keep in line with the usual procedure and confine my choice to old boys' books, my selected eight would be (1) "Nobody's Study" Gem No. 250. (2) "Mystery of the Priory" Rookwood Christmas classic. (3) "Greyfriars Christmas Party" Magnet 513, a Pentelow story introducing the colonials of St. Jim's and Greyfriars. (4) "The Haygarth Caravanners" by Jack North, B.F.L. No. 686. (5) "Pre-fect and Fag" by Jack North, B.F.L. No. 588. (6) One of Gwyn Evans' best, "The Mystery of Mrs. Bardell's Christmas Pudding" Union Jack No. 1157. (7) One of John Hunter's Captain Dack stories. (8) B.F.L. "School and Sport" now known to have been written by Mr. Samways.

The principal item on the night's programme was what we had all been waiting for - and it was well worth the waiting. Tom and Beryl's wedding, all filmed in colour, and displayed by our expert, George Chatham. One of the highlights of the year, brought back to us in

all its beauty. To give us full measure, we were also treated to yet another colour film, this time dealing with George's other hobby - narrow-gauge railways and their preservation. Amongst the mountains of North Wales we travelled along the well-known Tallylyn Railway. George divided his film into two main parts - the dead and the living. The former covered the now disused tracks and little stations and, in some cases, rolling stock of the derelict lines, while the second part and the more interesting for this reason - the two or three now being used, like the Tallylyn Railway.

The evening ended with the usual library interval, being followed by the always enjoyable reading from some well known old boys masterpiece. This time by Ted Davey.

HARRY BROSTER, Secretary.

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MERSEYSIDE

Meeting held Sunday, 6th December.

There was an excellent gathering at this, an informal Christmas meeting. It was good to see Frank Unwin back again and to know that his health has improved considerably during the past three months. Also, it was grand to see Bill Horton again, one of our oldest members who is not able to get along as often as he would wish. A letter of apology was read from Pat Laffey, who has only just recently come out of hospital. We hope to see him in the near future.

There being no prepared agenda, an informal discussion took place on the merits of the current Sexton Blake Libraries. It was agreed by nearly everybody that W. Howard Baker is doing a really good job.

A very fine spread was laid on by Mrs. Webster, full justice being done to it, and Jim Walsh, as always at our Christmas meetings, gave us the glass that cheers, and cigars for all. Many thanks to Mrs. Webster and Jim Walsh.

Three very amusing party games were arranged for the rest of the evening. One was Don Webster's "Doubles" in which we had to give the second part of popular phrases, such as Samson and Delilah. This was won by Frank Unwin, with 18 points. Frank then presented us with an elimination general knowledge quiz, which was carried off by Bill Horton, with Don Webster running second.

Lastly, Don Webster's version of "Totto", a word-making competition. This was won by Frank Unwin. Humorous prizes were presented to the winner, the sight of them bringing forth many chuckles.

To wind up the evening, toasts were proposed by Don Webster,

Frank Unwin and Jim Walsh to the O.B.B.C's at home and abroad, and all their members. This took us till ten o'clock, with general agreement that it had been one of the best meetings of the year.

Next meeting, Sunday, 10th January at 6.30 p.m. sharp.

NORMAN PRAGNELL, Secretary.

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LONDON

Meeting December 20th at Wood Green.

Our Les Rowley, out in Hanover, very kindly sent Horace Coker a fine tuck hamper, fully expecting the burly fifth-former to attend the Wood Green Christmas meeting. However, as Coker did not turn up, the members purloined the fine hamper of comestibles, and used the grand competition which the Johnny Bull of the Club - alias Les Rowley had sent to decide who should have the hamper.

Competitors had to give examples of how Billy Bunter would spell certain words. Eric Fayne was a good winner, and to the next two best competitors, Laurie Sutton and Roy Parsons, Bunter postal-orders were presented.

Len Packman gave an excellent reading from John Bott's "Christmas Book" entitled "Christmas Numbers." Eric Fayne announced that, up to the moment of speaking the party arranged to visit "Billy Bunter Flies East" was about 46. This was for January 2nd, while a further party would be visiting the theatre on January 9th.

There were five other quiz competitions, all thoroughly enjoyed. With excellent fare, appropriate to the festive season, a very good time was enjoyed by all.

Annual General Meeting on Sunday, January 17th, at 12 Clairview Road, Streatham, London, S.W. 16. 'Phone STReatham 0499.

Kindly let host Horace Roberts know if you are intending to be present.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

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NORTHERN

Christmas Party, 12th December, 1959

There were twenty of us at the Ninth Christmas Party, including two welcome guests from the Midland Club, Beryl and Tom Porter.

Although the weather outside was cold, inside all was warmth and gaiety. Five hours of fun and games and food. Even our old friend W. G. B. would have been satisfied.

After the tea, and before the toasts to the Hobby, to other Clubs, and to Frank Richards were drunk (in tea), Gerry announced that he had received a letter informing him that the Northern Section had been successful this year in winning the Greyfriars Cup. It was a case of Third Time Lucky for us.

From then on up till supper-time came the games - a picture puzzle quiz, Follow the Name game, Ask me Another, and so on. To enable us to get back our breath we had a reading by Gerry Allison of two exciting chapters from the Magnet Cavandale Abbey series.

Points were awarded for each game and totalled up at the end of the evening. Jack Wood tied with myself for first place, Geoffrey Wilde came second, Mollie Anderson third, Jessie Barlow fourth and Bill Williamson fifth. Jack relinquished his place as he himself had provided five really handsome prizes.

A most happy and merry evening was enjoyed by all present.

The next meeting is January 9th, when Stanley Smith provides the programme.

R. HODGSON.

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AUSTRALIA

The Golden Hours Club

It was with keen anticipation that members gathered at Cahill's Restaurant on Friday, December 18th at 6 p.m. to celebrate the second birthday of the Club as well as the festive occasion of Christmas. Three members, Victor Colby, Arthur Croser and Arnold Keena were unable to be with us, and this was the only disappointing feature of the evening.

After a meal worthy of the occasion had been ordered and served, a toast was proposed by the Chairman, Syd Smyth, and those present joined him in the wish for the continued success of the Club and the hope that all members would be with us to celebrate this happy event next year.

Greetings from Bill Hubbard in Kenya and Bill Gander in Canada were passed round, and cards received from our friends in the Northern and Midland Clubs were enjoyed. We hope our greetings reached you all in time for your parties.

Members were very pleased with the unusual gift received from Ben Whiter, and his unique book-marks will serve as a pleasant reminder of Ben himself and of our good friends in the London Branch. Needless to say, your letter was read with great interest by our Hamilton enthusiasts, and orders rolled in for the list of Magnet titles to be published

next year.

And, of course, our good friend Herbert Leckenby was not forgotten - we were sad to lose such a grand friend, but there is much happiness to be shared in memories of his friendship. The very touching tributes in the December C.D. were read, and we felt you were very near us in spirit, Herbert, on this happy evening.

The rest of the time passed very pleasantly, talking about the hobby - can you think of a better subject? and it was with the memory of a fine party that we wished one another a Merry Christmas and all success to the hobby in 1960, before making our ways homeward.

B. PATE, Secretary.

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WANTED: GENS 313, 314, 315, 316, 319, 320, 321, 322, 356, 358, 359, 376, 385, 386, 387, 392, 457, 459, 493, 773, 935, 946, 950, 951, 953, 954, 956, 964, 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, 345, 346, 347, 353, 357, 358, 386, 388, 389, 400, 411, 417, 469, 717, 719, 752, 773, 809, 834, 849, 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.

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ANOTHER 'INSPIRED COMMENT'

By W. O. G. Lofts

I was interested to read my good friend Gerry Allison's extract from a letter which he received from a postal member of the Northern Club, and feel also inspired to write a few lines in answer to the postal member's statements.

First, I would like to congratulate the correspondent on being obviously well informed and versed in the writings of G. R. Samways and John Nix Pentelow - as he is quite correct in stating that Magnet 424 and the Spring Series in the Gem were written by Samways and Pentelow respectively.

Mr. Samways would be the first to admit that many of the stories written in the 1916 period were a long way from the Hamilton standard - and they were indeed written under great difficulties as I will explain

further: Many of these substitute stories in 1916 were written whilst he was on active service in the Royal Flying Corps - and they simply had to be written and published or else the 'Magnet' would have had to cease publication owing to lack of copy.

John Nix Pentelow took over the 'Magnet' and 'Gem' at very short notice (Magnet No. 421) in 1916 and at the start had a very difficult task to keep the papers going. Copy from Mr. Hamilton was not always in hand for his peace and mind. On top of this Mr. Pentelow had suffered a great loss in the death of his wife. He had also been involved in a severe financial loss in a Cricket publishing venture which added to his troubles. I, of course, realise that the correspondent was only referring to his style of writing and not his personal character - but there is no doubt that Mr. Pentelow was under great difficulties and a very troubled man during his editorial duties on the Companion Paper.

I was rather amused at the comment that Mr. Pentelow was considered a 'universal knowall' from his style of writing. Maybe he does give that impression, but, in real life, I can assure the correspondent that he was far from it. Many editors and writers who knew him in the early days have said that he was a shy, reserved, quiet-spoken and timid type of man - aged by appearance long before his actual years. The correspondent is fully entitled to his opinion as to the merits of Mr. Pentelow's stories, but I would like to point out that there are probably as many admirers of his stories in the C.D. Circle as there are dislikers. Admirers include Len Packman, Bill Gander, Bill Hubbard, Harry Broster, Granville Waine, Derek Adley, the late Herbert Leckenby and many more.

If my good friend Gerry would let me have his correspondent's address, I should be delighted to correspond with him.

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**WANTED:** THE POPULAR - 109, 110, 114, 117-135, 137-139, 141-145, 147-163, 165, 166, 169-171, 174-184, 186-188, 190, 191, 193-201, 203-205, 207-213, 217-229, 231, 310, 311, 313, 314, 317, 318, 320-322, 325-334, 336-343, 345-350, 352-361, 380, 381, 388-398, 404, 406, 411-416, 418, 419, 424-431, 439, 449, 451, 452, 454-456, 459-488, 499, 518, 530, 538, 541-545, 547-551, 556-588, 560-566, 568, 571, 572, 577, 578, 581, 591, 596-599. S.O.Ls. 60, 68. GEMS 16, 37, 459, 364, 433.  
DR. ROBERT WILSON, 100 BROOMFIELD ROAD, GLASGOW, N.