

THE PUCK PIERROTS! SPECIAL WEEKLY ENTERTAINMENT!



No. 51 Vol. VIII.

EVERY FRIDAY, ONE PENNY

PUBLISHED BY

CASEY COURT THE GREAT EXHIBITION ATTRACTION.



It was a fine morning in the city of New York, and the great exhibition was drawing to its close. The people were all going to the city to see the last of the show. The man in the top hat was talking to the woman in the dress. They were both looking at the building with the sign that said 'PROPERTY'.



The man in the top hat was riding a horse through the crowd. He was looking back over his shoulder at the woman in the dress. The crowd was all cheering and shouting. The man in the top hat was smiling and waving his hand.



The man in the top hat was standing in the doorway. He was looking out at the crowd of people. The crowd was all cheering and shouting. The man in the top hat was smiling and waving his hand.



The man in the top hat was riding a horse through the crowd. He was looking back over his shoulder at the woman in the dress. The crowd was all cheering and shouting. The man in the top hat was smiling and waving his hand.



A large illustration of a busy street scene. There are many people walking, some on horseback. There are shops and buildings in the background. A horse-drawn carriage is in the foreground. The scene is very lively and full of activity.

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FOR SALE: GEMS: 529, 539, 561, 567, 569, 575, 577, 580, 583, 584, 588, 589, 591, 592, 613, 624, 629, 630, 682, 696, 704, 705, 706, 717, 725, 1059 to 1063, 1317.

POPULARS: 414 to 518 (WILL NOT BE SOLD SINGLY).

STARTLER: (Published by A.P. in 1930): 1 to 26 (WILL NOT BE SOLD SINGLY.)

SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY: First series: 28, 35, 36, 40, 65, 63, 70 to 72, 74, 78, 79, 81, 85 to 89, 91 to 95, 97, 98, 102 to 113, 115 to 146, 150 to 154, 158 to 160, 162, 164 to 169, 171 to 176, 178, 179, 181, 182, 185 to 189, 192 to 195, 198 to 200, 202 to 205, 207, 209 to 212, 214, 216 to 219, 222, 226, 228 to 231, 233, 236, 238, 239, 242, 243, 245, 246, 248, 255, 258, 260, 264, 270, 271, 273 to 276, 278, 280, 285, 287 to 289, 291 to 294, 296 to 298, 300, 305, 307, 309, 316 to 321, 324 to 326, 329 to 332, 334, 337 to 340, 342 to 248, 350 to 353, 355 to 359, 361, 364, 367, 369 to 373, 375, 377, 378, 380 to 382.

Second series: 2, 4 to 6, 8 to 22, 24 to 29, 31, 32, 34 to 46, 48 to 51, 56, 62, 68 to 75, 77, 78, 80, 81, 83, 84, 86, 87, 97, 105, 107, 108, 111, 115, 130, 135, 147, 148, 155, 158, 160, 161, 163, 200, 232, 251, 257, 287, 295, 299, 305, 327, 333, 337, 348.

BEST OFFERS, PLEASE. WRITE FIRST. CASH WHEN ORDER CONFIRMED.

ERIC COPEMAN, 50 RUBY STREET, MARRICKVILLE, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.

SALE: Reconditioned "Magnets" 1908 - 1915

"GEMS" 1907 - 15 (some copies less front or back covers or both), but stories complete. All one price - 10/- each.

"NELSON LEE LIBS." Old series - 2/6 each, 1918 - 26. 1st, 2nd and 3rd new series 1/6 each. 1926 - 33.

Approx. 200 "MARVELS" 1905 - 22. Approx. 100 BUFFALO BILL LIBS. 1d and 2d issues. 1/6 ea. ALDINE. Dixon Brett Libs. 1/6.

All above items - post free. S.A.E. for reply.

MR. J. R. SWAN, 3 FIFTH AVENUE, PADDINGTON, LONDON, W.10.

WANTED: Copies of "COMIC CUTS". Write: G. ALLISON, 3 BINGLEY ROAD, MENSTON, ILKLEY.

WANTED: Magnets prior to No. 1230. Later issues available for exchange also 1938 Holiday Annual.

H. S. BLEWITT, 17 GLYN ROAD, WORCESTER PARK, SURREY. (Derwent 9806)

SALE: MAGNETS: most between 1612 - 1683, 1/3 each: C.D.'s 5, 9, 49 to 162, 9d. each or £4 the lot; C.D. Annuals 1951 - 1958 8/6d each; Startler (1930 - 2) 4, 23, 53, 75, 85, 100, 101. 1/- each or 6/- the lot. Complete files of Old Boys Book Collector, 1 - 3 (1952), 3/- lot; St. Jim's reprints in Sun 194 - 227 (1952 - 3) 8/6d lot; Carcroft stories in Silver Jacket 1 - 27 (plus binding cases) (Australia 1953 - 5) 16/- lot; School Cap 1 - 10 (1953) 7/6; Junior News 1 - 21 (1953 - 4) 8/6; Boys World 1 - 17 (195C) 12/6. Typewritten files containing complete titles, details of reprints and subs. of Magnets, Gem, Nelson Lee 2/6 each. Postage extra.

A. P. BAKER, 74 CHURCH STREET, REIGATE, SURREY.

COMIC PAPERS 1890 - 1914 WANTED, particularly "Comic Cuts"

A. HARRIS, CAYNTON, LLANRHOS ROAD, LLANDUDNO.

WANTED: Nelson Lees old series Nos. 106, 252, 294, 328 - 8, 331, 334, 357, 520, 533, and many Modern Boys. Also Modern Boys for sale or exchange.

G. GRANT-McPHERSON, 1 ST. JOHN STREET, WELLS, SOMERSET.

WANTED: Sexton Blake Libraries 1st series Nos. 11, 17, 37, 105, 109, 111, 198, 201, 219, 2nd series Nos. 293, 296, 306, 422, 474, 485, 520, 667. Union Jacks Nos. 689, 691, 693, 702, 704, 711, 721, 725, 736, 740, 785, 786, 788, 790, 789, 793, 798, 800, 802, 803, 809, 811, 813, 814, 818, 819, 1041, 1064, 1098, 1390.

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

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

FOUNDED IN 1947 by HERBERT LECKENBY

Vol. 15

Number 177

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Price 2s. Od.

EDITORIAL



FRANK NUGENT
Editor



VERNON SMITH
Editor



JACKY SMARTON
Editor



ROBERT C. EDDY
Editor



MARK LINLEY
Editor

CONCERNING CRITICISM. A crop of interesting and useful letters have come in with reference to last month's Editorial. A letter from Mr. Benjamin Whiter, secretary of our London Club, is published in full in Yours Sincerely feature this month. There is, of course, a good deal in what Mr. Whiter writes. At times, those who do the least in any walk of life are the first to criticize.

All the same, fair criticism is open to all, and should not cause any heartache. That a man does not write for the magazine is no reason why he should not offer constructive criticism, if he feels so inclined. After all, a parent reasonably expects the best education for his son though he may not be a teacher himself.

Our Creator has gifted each one of us in different ways. It isn't every man who is capable of writing an article or a story, or of drawing a cover. If isn't every man who has the time for an article which entails a good deal of research. It is probable that only a few possess a sufficiently large collection to make even minor research possible. As I see it, a reader may be thundering keen on our hobby and entirely loyal to our magazine, even though, for some reason or other, he never writes a line for us; and we are none the worse, at this office, for fair criticism. In fact we may be a little better for it.

I am deeply grateful to all our contributors, and I am thankful to say that I have never been short of material. Often, owing to pressure on space, contributors have to wait quite a time before they see their effusions in print. Sometimes, for one reason or another,

it may not be possible to use certain items, though all are warmly welcomed and carefully considered.

In our August issue we published items - some long, some short - from 27 contributors. Could any editor complain at such wonderful support? I think, too, that every reader must have found something of interest in such a packed issue.

THE 1961 ANNUAL. With this issue comes to you the order form for this year's Annual. It is with regret, and some sense of frustration, that we announce that the cost of the 1961 Annual must be increased to 15/-. It is the old story of the vicious spiral - trying to keep pace with costs which go creeping up all the time.

It was in 1957 that the Annual rose to 12/6. That year things may have broken even, and, no doubt, our late editor hoped that production costs might remain static. But things being what they are in our world today, expenses went on creeping up, and the Annual was soon running at a loss again.

In the past few years the income from the Annual has fallen short of general production costs, and this year an increase in price is unavoidable if an even higher loss is not to be encountered.

We realise that at 15/-, plus postage and packing, the Annual will be an expensive luxury, and we shall quite understand if some readers who have supported the publication in the past do not feel able to do so this year. We do, however, feel assured at least of the sympathetic understanding of all our readers.

One thing we promise you. The Annual will be a book worth having. Next month we shall give you a peep into some of the outstanding attractions which the 1961 Annual will have in store for you.

Advertisements in the Annual are accepted at 2d. per word or serial number. Space is provided on the order form for you to write your advertisement, if desired. The more advertisers who support us, the nearer we shall be to catching up with production costs.

THE EDITOR.

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

For a change this month we present for your enjoyment the cover of PUCK. The issue is dated June 1908. Look out for NEXT MONTH'S STAR ATTRACTION: "THE STORY OF PUCK."

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DEATH OF Mrs. BERYL PORTER

It is with the utmost grief that Collectors' Digest records the death of Mrs. Beryl Porter of our Midland Club. Only a few short years ago, Beryl was married to Tom Porter, both being outstanding members of the Midland Club. The devotion between these two was wonderful and rare, and our sorrow is deepened in the knowledge that these two splendid people are now temporarily parted.

Beryl had a serious operation last year. She seemed to be making good progress, and our Midland friends were looking forward to welcoming her back to the club meetings ere long. But, unhappily, Beryl had a relapse, and she passed away in hospital on Monday, 7th August. The interment took place at Cradley Heath on Saturday, 12th August.

The Editor of Collectors' Digest expresses his deepest sympathy with our friend Tom Porter in his great loss - a loss which our entire movement shares.

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DIXON HAWKE - AND THE THOMSON PAPERS.

By Derek Adley and Bill Lofts

Introduction by DEREK ADLEY

A chance remark to Bill on the telephone brought to light the fact that we both had the same idea in mind and that was to write an article about the Thomson papers, mainly in reply to Christopher Lowder's remarks in the April C.D.

In order to relieve the editor from having the problem of deciding which article to print, we have decided to combine our efforts into one complete script which is probably the first informative article written about the Thomson papers.

There is no question at all of the Thomson papers being underrated, for although it would appear so, by the lack of articles about these periodicals in current C.D.'s, correspondence with other collectors prove otherwise. The reason for the lack of articles is mainly due to the fact that ever since the mighty Scottish firm of D. C. Thomson launched their first boy's paper, Adventure in 1921, all the stories have appeared anonymously making it exceedingly difficult to pen anything about the men behind the scenes, who no doubt would have been able to reveal many secrets regarding Thomson policies. Nearly all the information in this article has been obtained from writers who contributed to the Thomson papers and indeed many of them were prolific writers of A.P. stories!

For a start, we will look at the "Dixon Hawke Library" which first appeared in 1919 priced at 3d. with 120 pages. This was an obvious attempt to rival the A.P.'s Sexton Blake Library but with a smaller sized page. We do not know who created the character or who actually penned the first story, but on information received we are

inclined to think that it was editorially created as with other famous characters and stories in Thomson papers (e.g. Red Circle School. More about this at a later date). All stories featured Dixon Hawke and his assistant Tommy Burke and were anonymous but it may surprise collectors to know that they were mainly written by authors of Sexton Blakel. Authors include Richard Coyne, John G. Brandon, Rex Harding, Gilbert Chester, J. Pendower, John Creasey, Addington Symonds, Reginald Thomson, etc. The D.H.L. ran to 576 issues and ended in the year 1941 and we are given to understand that Frank Howe and Richard Coyne have more stories to their credit than any other authors.

Each year Thomson's also published the "Dixon Hawke Case Book" this being a paper covered book containing many short stories of the detective, and we can say definitely, that these were chiefly written by Jacques Pendower, better known as T. C. Jacobs.

The first boys' weekly to be published by Thomson's was "Adventure" and the first issue was dated 17th September, 1921, photo cards of famous footballers being given away to attract readers. This also contained a yarn about Dixon Hawke and it was in this paper that the detective appeared throughout its run at occasional periods, and once again Jacques Pendower was one of the chief writers of these particular stories.

The "Adventure" was followed on the 4th March, 1922 by the "Rover", a paper very similar in contents. An unusual feature was that one story was said to have been written by Arthur Grimsdell who played football for Tottenham Hotspur and England, but of course this was a stunt that was fast becoming a regular thing, the idea being to give a popular sporting personality's name to a story which in reality was written by a regular author, thus creating a terrific circulation booster. (Note by Derek Adley: this did in fact happen to my uncle, Dickie March, who played for Queens Park Rangers. He was paid a sum of money by the A.P. so that his name would appear on a feature in the Football Weekly, written probably by A. S. Hardy.)

The story in the "Rover" bearing the name of Arthur Grimsdell was one of the only occasions that Thomsons strayed from their rigid policy of publishing completely anonymous publications. Why Thomson's adhered to this policy is only known to themselves for certainly the authors didn't care whether their names were given or not, as long as they got paid for their work. By the tremendous and consistent circulation of the Dundee papers it would certainly appear that this idea paid off although for some strange reason Thomson's published authors names to the stories that were contained in their annuals such as Skipper, Rover and Adventure. Before leaving the subject of authors' names, one Thomson author suggested that the powers that be, felt that any success won by their papers should go to the Thomson organisation as a whole and not to any individual author.

According to information given by various A.P. editors the Thomson papers gave them very great concern and in fact they actually modelled the style of many of their new papers on those from the Scottish firm, even to the extent of dropping the authors' names. Evidence of this can be found in such papers as Ranger, Pilot, Puck, etc.

A most surprising failure of Thomson's was the fact that they seemed unable to break into the tight stronghold the A.P. had on girls' publications. On 28th October, 1922 they produced the "Bluebird" a new paper for girls. This was very similar in format to the boys' papers "Rover" and "Adventure" but of course with a girlish flavour. The A.P. promptly sensed the danger and brought out "Ruby" to combat it. Shortly after, Thomson's appeared to lose interest in the girls' papers and publication of "Bluebird" ceased.

On 23rd September 1922 Thomson's launched the "Wizard" and the editorial showed a picture of the editor as a breezy young man, who told the reader that he had travelled all round the world and that he believed in being pals with the reader and certainly it was put in a far different manner to the way the A.P. editorials were put. There was this pally attitude instead of the fatherly manner, and no preaching on such things as "don't smoke" and "don't play the giddy ox," etc. We must say here that we are giving the facts and neither upholding this policy nor criticising it.

The "Vanguard" was next in the field, first appearing on the 13th October, 1923. This was of the same style as its companion papers but did not enjoy a very long run. It has been said that the paper's contents were mainly reprints and if so this could have

been the reason for its short life.

The next Thomson boys' weekly was not until 6th September 1930 - this was the Skipper, and it has the distinction of being the only war casualty of Thomson's boys' weeklies. In 18 months time Thomson tried a new experiment, a smaller type of boys' paper consisting of reprints of complete serials. This new venture was the "Red Arrow" and probably its short life was due to the lack of variety in the stories. For example, in other Thomson papers the reader would get 6, 7 or even 8 stories each week compared to the one or two only that were contained in the "Red Arrow", for even then the trend was on the way to short stories as long ones were too much of an effort to read. "Red Arrow" was first published 19th March, 1932 and ran to 53 issues.

The last major boys' weekly to be published by Thomson's in pre-war years was the "Hotspur" in 1933 and this paper really needs pages to describe in detail, for it contained each week for over twenty-one years a story of Red Circle School. We both feel here that we must restrict ourselves to only a few lines in this particular article regarding Red Circle as it would spoil a future article if we were to say too much. We must be content to say therefore that Red Circle School was editorially created and was written about by several authors, some for quite longish periods. The principle of the characters growing up is not quite as chaotic as some people may think for there were five distinct phases where the characters moved up a form and eventually left the school. In our research we have managed to compile a complete list of titles, together with a classification of all the series, plus an almost complete list year by year, of all the characters mentioned, plus localities, studies, establishments, etc. The information would practically fill a C.D. Annual if published in full. However, if there is found to be any great interest in Red Circle, perhaps we could condense the information into several occasional small articles.

A TOAST!

In commemoration of an article on the "Thomson Papers" in this month's C.D. - Gentlemen! A Toast to a famous "Boys' Paper" born in September 1922 and still going strong. Thousands of stories have passed through its pages - giving boys hours of pleasure - and men in their forties still remember them! Gentlemen! I give you "THE WIZARD"!

J. R. SWAN

WELCOME TO ELAINE FROM HOVE

In this month's Women's Mirror we spotted a letter to the Editor from Mr J. R. of Hove, welcoming the news that the old film serial "Exploits of Elaine" is to be shown on T.V. We feel sure that J. R. is our old and valued friend "Robby" who had much correspondence with film star Pearl White years ago.

We hope that one of these days Robby will be tempted to drop a few lines to the editor of C.D. It would be grand to hear from him again.

YE OLDE CYNIQUE INN

It isn't the people who tell all they know that cause most of the trouble; it's the ones who tell more.

"THE HARD COVER SCHOOL STORY CLASSICS"

By W. J. A. Hubbard

No. 2. "Mike" - P. G. Wodehouse.

There could hardly be a greater contrast between "Mike" and the previous story reviewed in this series. "The Bending of a Twig" is in many respects an adult study of boyhood while "Mike" is a school cricket story pure and simple. Yet it would be foolish to deny that "Mike" has not its moments of character study for it was written by an outstanding novelist whose efforts over many years have shown him to be a master of the English language and one of the leading writers of modern times.

The name of P. G. Wodehouse is too well known to need elaboration here. The writer of many excellent novels and short stories featuring many famous character and the contributor of the lyrics to many well known West End Musicals and Revues he is internationally famous and is still writing today despite the fact that he must be close on 80 years of age. What is less well-known, however, is that he began his career as a writer of boys' stories, several of which can be definitely described as "Classics" by any standards.

"Mike" is a reprint of two stories originally written by Mr. Wodehouse before the 1914-18 war for "The Captain", - a magazine for Public, Grammar and Secondary School boys which has been described by many of its admirers as one of the finest papers ever published for boys. In my view this praise is not undeserved for its contents still read extraordinary well even today.

Realism was always a feature of "The Captain" and "Mike" is not lacking in this respect. It is close to adult standards and its cricket atmosphere and description are impeccable which is not surprising when one remembers that not only was Mr. Wodehouse an excellent performer himself both with bat and ball * but understood both the theory and traditions of the game. It has also been suggested that in describing the two schools featured in "Mike" - Wrykyn and Sedleigh - Mr. Wodehouse did not hesitate to use a Dulwich College background and customs.

The hero of "Mike" is Michael Jackson, the youngest of a family of five cricketing brothers. One suspects that Mr. Wodehouse had the famous Foster brotherhood + in mind when he created the Jackson family.

The first half of "Mike" covers Mike Jackson's arrival at Wrykyn at the beginning of the summer term. Rather older than the usual new boy - he is 15 - he finds the cricket reputation of his family a great help and soon settles down determined to obtain a place in the 1st XI.

His friendship with a rather adventurous and irresponsible senior named Wyatt who encourages Mike's cricket pretensions, his embarrassment when he finds that he is actually displacing his elder brother - Bob - in the XI and his duel with the Head of his House - Firby-Smith - who effectively checks a tendency on Mike's part towards a swelled head, are extremely well described for although this story is primarily concerned with school cricket it does not neglect characterisation. The cricket sequences are, however, very finely written and show the author's mastery in describing sporting events, a mastery that never deserted him in any of the school stories he contributed to "The Captain." Indeed the chapter entitled "The M.C.C. Match" was reproduced by Mr. Howard Marshall in a book of Cricket Stories published some years ago, a compliment that was thoroughly deserved.

The second half of the story also contains a good deal of cricket but is chiefly notable for the introduction of Mr. Wodehouse's famous character "Psmith", the forerunner of a long line of Wodehouse characters that the author has produced over the years down to the present day. Nearly three years have gone by and Mike Jackson is Captain-Elect of the Wrykyn XI.

His school work, however, has been far from satisfactory and instead of returning to Wrykyn for the summer term he is sent to Sedleigh, a much smaller school with a reputation for scholarship. There he meets Rupert Smith who has been superannuated from Eton for the same reason. A brilliant piece of larger than life characterisation, "Psmith" makes a great impact on the reader and he was featured by Mr. Wodehouse in many other fine stories for some years.

Mike and "Psmith" form an alliance with considerable success. Both boys are feeling frustrated - Mike because he has not been allowed to captain the Wrykyn XI and "Psmith" because he has been deprived of a place in the Eton XI. They proceed to work off their grievances against Sedleigh, each in his own fashion and make thorough nuisances of themselves but are eventually brought to realise the pettiness of their conduct by the determination of Adair, the Cricket Captain. In the end, Sedleigh play Wrykyn and thanks to the combined efforts of Mike, "Psmith", who proves himself a brilliant all-round cricketer, and Adair, they win a low scoring match with only a few minutes to spare, a worthy climax to a school story that deserves the adjective of "classic" in more ways than one.

* He was in the Dulwich College XI in 1898 and was at school with such well known cricketers as F. P. and

N. A. Knox and H. O. Dolbey, who all figured in the Surrey XI.

- + The seven sons of the Revd. H. Foster who featured in the Malvern and Worcestershire XIs with considerable success.

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THE PASSING OF W. E. STANTON-HOPE

By Ernie Carter

This well-known writer of Amalgamated Press stories and books on travel passed away on the 1st August at Artarmon, near Sydney. He was 72 years of age.

Stanton Hope will be remembered as the editor of Chuckles in 1915, and later wrote many substitute stories for the Magnet and Gem. Many Sexton Blake stories also came from his pen.

Members of the O.B.B.C. in Sydney had the pleasure of meeting him on several occasions. He was a great authority on A.P. artists and authors.

We can ill afford to lose such men, for the ranks of these old authors are growing very thin. Members of the O.B.B.C. sent their messages of sympathy to his widow.

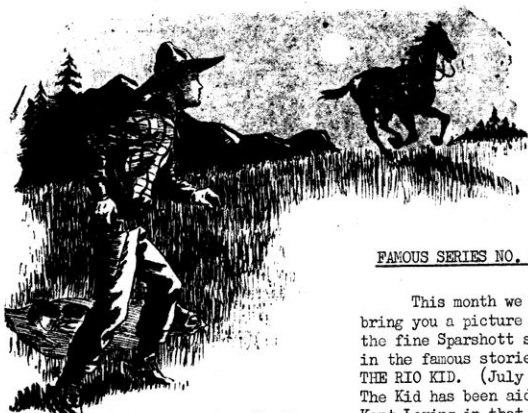
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SEPTEMBER WITH SEXTON BLAKE

The forthcoming September issues of the S.B.L. seem to give exceptional promise. Collectors' Digest reader REX DOLPHIN, who can always be relied upon for a first-class yarn, offers "TROUBLE IS MY NAME." Also, pre-war writer WARWICK JARDINE makes a most welcome return after many years with "DEATH HER DESTINATION." This is described as a story with "vintage Blakian flavour," and it will be especially welcomed for that fact alone.

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HAMILTONIANA



THE EMPTY SADDLE! From the dark plains the beat of a horse's galloping hoofs came to the Kid's ears. He turned, and his face darkened as a horse came panting up. It was Kent Loring's horse—but the saddle was empty! (See Chapter 1.)

FAMOUS SERIES NO. 11

This month we bring you a picture from the fine Sparshott series in the famous stories of **THE RIO KID**. (July 1928). The Kid has been aiding Kent Loring in that young man's feud with the brutal Sparshott brothers. Kent Loring's horse is found running without

its rider. The Kid's problem: Has Kent Loring been "wiped out" at last?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

By Roger M. Jenkins

No. 37 - Magnet No. 129 - "Alonzo the Great"

One of the glories of the red Magnet was Alonzo Todd, a good-

natured simpleton who was as easily imposed upon as Clarence Cuffy of Rookwood. For many years Alonzo was the only Todd at Greyfriars, and his store of maxims (all taught to him by his sensible Uncle Benjamin) was always available to exacerbate the feelings of the victim of any particular moment. He always meant well, but was responsible for many disasters at Greyfriars.

Magnet No. 129 starred Mr. Quelch in a somewhat unfavourable light. It was a hot afternoon, and the class was restive, with the result that numerous impositions (increased as a result of impertinence) were handed out to the Removites. Harry Wharton and Co. decided to write their lines, and a few others like Bunter and Todd were persuaded to do the same, but the majority sided with Bulstrode, the ex-captain of the Remove.

Bulstrode had a bright idea. He argued that the Removites should appeal to the Head, who would undoubtedly be surprised to learn that a total of three thousand lines had been set in one afternoon. Dr. Locke would, Bulstrode felt certain, rebuke Mr. Quelch. The form master, wounded by such a signal mark of his chief's displeasure, would probably resign. At the worst, the Removites would incur no further punishment; at the best, they would be relieved of their impositions and might well even be relieved of Mr. Quelch into the bargain.

Unfortunately the scheme went awry, and the Head asked some searching questions. The discomfiture of the rebels was further increased when Alonzo Todd was called upon to give evidence. With his usual naivety he completely let the cat out of the bag: "I am sorry to fail to back up Bulstrode, but it is impossible to take two sides at once. I hope Bulstrode will see that, and not bear malice. Besides, I think it is very probable that, if Mr. Quelch were induced to resign, we might get a worse form master." In the end, Bulstrode got a caning in addition to the original imposition.

Charles Hamilton has stated that he let Alonzo gently fade out of the stories because he had an idea that the readers were getting tired of him. Whatever the readers of the time may have thought, however, it seems clear that most collectors greatly regret his departure from the stories. A schoolboy with a natural simplicity of character allied to a kindly disposition can always be relied upon to amuse the readers with 'mirth that has no bitter springs' - Gussy is an example of this in a less extreme form. Perhaps a future Bunter book will find space to feature another visit from Alonzo Theophilus Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars.

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIALNO. 52. THE MAN WITH THE BRUSH

Just how much did our favourite papers owe to the men who illustrated them? The story was the main thing, undoubtedly, but it is certain that a good regular artist gave individuality to a paper.

Recently a reader wrote that the Gem never seemed quite right unless it was illustrated by Macdonald - and I am in full agreement with this. I would also suggest that both Macdonald and Chapman became so "typed" that they always seemed out of place if they were illustrating anything but the Gem and the Magnet respectively. I recall a few Magnets illustrated by Macdonald, and the sight of them is somehow irritating. In the same way, Chapman could never draw St. Jim's character convincingly.

My own opinion is that it was possible to have too many pictures - and that there often were too many. I think it was a mistake when the pictures gave away the entire plot of the story - and they often did. There were countless occasions when, by looking over all the pictures, one knew the construction of the plot, which was thus spoiled for the reader.

I wonder whether editorial directions were always quite adequate, for the artists concerned. Macdonald tended, at times, to be careless, and perhaps, thoughtless. When the chums were on the Congo, he portrayed them in Etons, complete with stiff collars and long trousers. When Monty Lowther ran away from school to become an actor, Dr. Holmes went after him to a theatre in a distant town, to fetch him back. Macdonald drew the Head in cap and gown striding on the stage to interrupt the performance.

Charles Hamilton rarely included much detail. No doubt he felt it unnecessary to state that, before leaving the school, Dr. Holmes discarded cap and gown and donned an overcoat and a silk hat. He left matter like that to the common-sense of his readers. He was equally entitled to leave them to the common-sense of the artists.

In fact, Charles Hamilton really gave surprisingly few details concerning his characters. I can think of no boy, apart from Bunter, who wore glasses at Greyfriars. Yet, in real schools, it is surprising how many actually wear glasses. Shields gave Fisher T. Fish horn-rimmed glasses - an example of the artist using his own initiative to good purpose. I do not recall Fishy's glasses ever being mentioned in a story.

It has been claimed that it was Mr. Chapman who gave Bunter his

check trousers. In this instance, in my view, the artist made an error, for a school of the standing of Greyfriars would assuredly have a rigid uniform, and I do not believe that one boy would have been permitted to wear a violent check in trousering. This legend of Bunter's trousers has been carried even further in the Bunter stage shows, for Bunter's check trousers are mustard-coloured.

Diamond pins and finger-rings were not permitted at Greyfriars, and I am doubtful whether fancy waistcoats would have been permitted. I certainly would never have allowed them in my own school.

I often wonder whether Shields used his own idea on a cover in the Smedley series, by depicting boys inflating a rubber toy to frighten Smedley. The incident is mentioned in the story in a short sequence which seems to have been interpolated by the editorial pen. Actually, the story "Bunter the Ventriloquist", did not further the Smedley plot in any way, and I consider the Smedley series, rather on the long side, would be all the better without this tale at all.

These criticisms are merely passing thoughts. While we remember St. Jim's and Greyfriars we shall always remember Macdonald, Chapman and Shields. And, of course, Wakefield for Rookwood. The old papers would have been much the poorer without their work.

An artist, noteworthy for his great loyalty to his author, is Thomas Henry who has illustrated the "William" stories for forty years. It is a joy to examine his illustrations, comparing them with the text of the stories, and to find that no detail is overlooked. In one tale, one of William's party is a little girl, who, according to Richmal Crompton, looked like a little edition of Queen Victoria. Sure enough, there is Queen Victoria in the picture, with her "we are not amused" expression.

This sort of thing made the pictures really worthwhile and were a joy. Careless portrayals, on the other hand, destroyed illusion, which was a pity.

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

CONTROVERSIAL ECHOES

No. 51. THERE'S JOY IN ARGUMENT

BILL LOFTS: I quite agree that it was out of the question for Mr. Hamilton to be paid a fee to "sub" the substitute writers' work. He could easily spend his time in writing fresh Greyfriars stories himself.

My statements at various times regarding the circulations of the Magnet and Gem have come from persons actively connected with the papers, including C. M. Down who was on the staff from the very first issue.

All have been speaking from memory, of course, and can possibly be wrong in certain details. A former sub-editor, Mr. E. C. Snow, now in Australia, has claimed that in 1919 the Gem overtook the Magnet, but there is nothing really concrete. The only time figures were published was in the early 20's at an advertising exhibition at Olympia. At that time, the Magnet was slightly higher than the Gem.

It's a good point that the circulations of both papers must have been healthy for them to run nearly 33 years, but although they compared favourably with many rivals, they certainly never reached anything of the high circulation of the Thomson papers in the 20's and 30's. Mr. Down told me that he was concerned at the lowish circulation of both papers in the early 30's when they gave away free gifts to try and boost the sales.

I shall ask my correspondent to elucidate further on the Bob Cherry-Expelled affair. In fairness to him, he is relying on his memory of nearly 50 years ago.

RON CROLLIE: I agree whole-heartedly with the statement "There's Joy in Argument." How right you are in pointing out that if everything had been perfect we would have nothing to argue about today. The whole gorgeously muddled set-up is a perfect basis for discussion - the numerous stories by substitute writers, the constant reprinting of old stories by substitute writers, the constant reprinting of old stories, the daring decision to change a weekly devoted to a private detective to a story paper on school life, whether it would have been better for Mr. Hamilton to have concentrated on the Magnet and Gem to the exclusion of Rookwood, etc., whether the reprints should have appeared unabridged, whether E. S. Brooks based his character on those of Mr. Hamilton - and so on. I hope we will continue to argue all these points for many years to come.

RAY HOPKINS: Mr. Hamilton is now concentrating on Greyfriars which, it has been suggested, would have been a benefit to the Magnet in the old days. Now that he is bending all his energies to add to the Greyfriars saga, what are his admirers doing? Tutting because there are no new St. Jim's stories? Such is human nature.

I must say that I, too, have regretted loudly about the non-appearance of old favourites, but we must not expect that Mr. Hamilton is able to concentrate on too many diverse schools at his age. He is doing a most excellent job of work (and long may he wave), and we have all the glories of the past in which to delve. We are very lucky that so much of his work has survived and this is incredible when one considers that it was all published in that kind of format which, like newspapers, ends in the fire or with the lid of the dustbin being clanged on it.

KENNETH KIRBY: I agree fully with you over the Boys Own Paper which contained a number of very fine stories, though it was perhaps especially suited to a day when people had plenty of time to spend on reading such stories as Jules Verne's "800 Leagues down the Amazon". I am interested in the real merit or otherwise of the "sub" stories. Would it not be possible for you to get Mr. Samways or Mr. Lofts to select a few of what they consider the best of the substitute stuff, and for extracts to be published? Perhaps Mr. Samways would select what he considers to be his best story. I should like to judge for myself if he can match the compelling force of such a scene as that in which Whaeton forces Stacey to admit ownership of the incriminating letter, or the seizing of the tuckshop in the Tuckshop Rebellion.

On the other hand, it is absurd to suggest that even Charles Hamilton could maintain a uniformly high standard over 2000 odd stories, and it would be interesting to see if the sub writers come anywhere near matching him on his off days.

ERIC FAYNE adds: The giving of Free Gifts was not restricted to the Gem and Magnet. It seems to me that most papers gave away something at sometime or other. It is, of course, realised that Bill's correspondent was relying on his memory over many years for his recollections.

GEMS OF HAMILTONIANA

Levison, with all his faults, was still, in the fag's eyes, the big brother whom he had always loved and admired, though what Frank saw in Levison to cause either affection or admiration was a puzzle to everybody else.

From Gem 466 "The Wisdom of Gussy"

(Sent in by Ron Crollie)

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Prout breathed hard. He breathed deep. Prout was fed-up to the very chin with that troublesome member of his form. He often made allowances for Coker. There was a certain rugged honesty in Coker, along with his impenetrable stupidity. Troublesome and exasperating as he was, Prout never had any disagreeable doubts and suspicions about him, as he sometimes had about fellows like Price and Hilton. Coker's heart was all right, whatever might be said of his head. Really and truly, Prout wanted to go as easy as he could with the fathead of his form.

From Magnet 1630 "Fool's Luck"

(Sent in by Ted Davey)

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(Book souvenirs are awarded to the senders of all items found suitable for publication in this column.)

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ROOKWOOD

Large numbers of Digest readers are supporting KNOCKOUT since Rookwood was added to that very attractive little paper. The famous kidnapping series ended in mid-August. The presentation of this story did not quite live up to the standard which was promised in the earliest instalments. The pruning was very drastic, giving the effect of too much dialogue, with too many of the author's inimitable touches removed.

At times, there was evidence of that infuriating "change for the sake of change." For instance: "Hark!" said Jimmy Silver became "Listen!" said Jimmy Silver. There were far too many of these pointless changes. In one instalment, for no apparent reason, a short sequence was written in, and Dr. Chisholm was made to observe "Rot!"

Certainly Owen Conquest would never have made the Head of Rockwood use such an expression.

The general result was something of a skeleton with most of the flesh removed, but, from readers' letters to the Digest, the story was much appreciated. It would seem that the tale came, this time, from the Boys' Friend, for in the Schoolboys' Own Library edition the name of the kidnapper, for some unknown reason, was changed, years ago, to "Langton."

Now running in KNOCKOUT is the series in which Putty Grace arrived at the school. This was a 5-story series which commenced in the Boys' Friend in March 1919.

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THE LAST DAY AT THE OVAL

Congratulations to our Australian pals on the success and grand cricket of their Test eleven over here this summer. Disappointing for England, yet a magnificent series, with stirring play at times from both sides, and the finest spirit of the game always in evidence.

And that last day at the Oval. The Ashes lost for England, the series lost, every interest as dead as a doornail - and England fighting like a pack of demons. Like losing the ship, and fighting like hell to save the tattered flag from the masthead before the wreck goes down. How typical of the English!

Subba Row, a Wingate to his fingertips, fighting for that century to make him only the second man in history to get a century in his first and his last Tests. And when he got it - the roaring of the meagre crowd, in that dreary weather - making up in quality for what they lacked in quantity. The Aussies, excited as a Rookwood crowd, surrounding him, banging him on the back, shaking his hand.

Stocky, Handforthish Barrington, fighting all the way for his magnificent 81; Murray, Bob Cherryish, laughing, happy-go-lucky, prince of wicketkeepers, banging all round the wicket for a lost cause. And dear, schoolboyish, Tom Merryish David Allen, with the strap broken on his pad, and an Aussie providing a handkerchief to tie the pad to his leg. It could happen in a Third Form match, but never in a Test. Yet it did.

And Benaud, who had been cheered every inch of his triumphant way, running the gamut of his bowlers to try to dislodge the fighters for a lost cause. In the last hour, when the draw was certain, he could, so easily, have turned it into a farce, but he didn't. He fought on like blazes, tough as iron. And Cardewish Harvey, who came on to rapturous applause, to bowl that magnificent over near the end. And, at the end,

Benaud permitting himself the final chuckle with the last ball of the 1961 Tests.

Cricket dull? Ye gods! You can have every football match this season and next in exchange for that Last Day at the Oval.

* * * * *

EDWARD BLIGHT

LIST OF BOOKS FOR SALE.

"Treneglos"

12, Trevarthian Road,
St. Austell, Cornwall.

- Boys of England. Vol. 9. 20 loose copies, January 1871.
Vol. 10. 18 loose copies, May 1871 to November 1871,
including number 249 commencing Jack Harkaway's School
Days. Vol. 33, 1881. 16 numbers. 12/6 the above lot.
- Boys of England. Volume 12, 1871. "Jack Harkaway after Schooldays"
"Jack Harkaway at Oxford" including Xmas number with
coloured plate. 7/6. Bound vol.
Volume 16. Bound. December 1873 to October 1874
including extra number "Tales of Temple Bar", "Jack
Harkaway among the Brigands" "Schoolboys of Old
London." 7/6.
Volume 49. Bound. June 1890 to June 1891. 7/6.
- 4 Jack Harkaway stories in a nicely bound volume, almost new condition.
15/-. Jack Harkaway in American. J.H. out West among
the Indians. J.H. in search of the Mountain of Gold.
J.H. Among the Malay Pirates.
- Jack Harkaway and his Sons Adventures in China. Paper bound. 3/6.
- Jack Harkaway and his Father at the Haunt of the Pirates. Paper
bound. 3/6.
- Boys Friend 1d. series bound volume. 8 stories by Reg. Wray, David
Goodwin, Sidney Drew, Murray Graydon. In excellent
condition. £3.

POSTAGE EXTRA ON ALL SALES.

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The Editor regrets that, for reasons beyond his control, it is not possible this month to publish our usual popular reviews of the latest Sexton Blake novels.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

I am urgently seeking information about the late Cecil Hayter. The Blake stories he wrote for the U.J. are of course, known to me (see 1953 C.D. Annual), but that is about all. If any reader can tell me anything about this popular author of his day, I shall be most grateful. One thing in particular intrigues me (and the reader who wrote to me pointing it out), and that is the fact that Hayter did not write a single Blake story featuring Sir Richard Losely and Lohangu for the S.B. Library although Blake and Losely went to school together as related in the Boys' Friend Library. Does anyone know why?

JOSIE PACKMAN

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I MEET PIERRE QUIROULE

By W. O. G. Lofts
(continued)

The great popularity of Mr. Sayer's stories is proved by the fact that the majority were reprinted for the overseas market, where the name "Pierre Quiroule" was as well known as in this country. His first Blake story, according to the 'official list' of authors supplied by Mr. H.W. Twyman, former editor of the UNION JACK, was No. 908 of that paper, entitled "The Crooks of Monte Carlo" and dated 5 March, 1921*. At the time of writing I have asked Mr. Sayer if he wrote any stories before Mr. Twyman took over the Editorial Chair.

(* The 'official list' is from Mr. Twyman's commencement of office.)

Apart from his Sexton Blake stories, W. W. Sayer wrote a great deal for the "Champion" group of papers, a serial in the ROCKET (under the name of 'Wal Sayer') dealing with the River Amazon and South America. Like many other writers of juvenile fiction of that time he also wrote for the Scottish firm of Thomson, numerous of his stories appearing in the DIXON HAWKE LIBRARY, WIZARD, ROVER, ADVENTURE, etc.

When it was decided that the author's name should accompany the U.J. stories, Mr. Sayer decided to use a nom-de-plume. To be a little different from the usual trend of pen-names he chose the most unusual one of "Pierre Quiroule" which, in French, means 'rolling stone'. He chose this firstly because he was rather a rolling stone himself in his younger days, and secondly in honour of his wife - who was French.

Here I would like to emphasize a point I made in a recent article about Arthur J. Palk. (July C.D.) One would have thought it almost impossible that another writer used 'Pierre Quiroule' as a pen-name - and yet one did! This was a mysterious individual, whose true identity has never been revealed and who was writing under that name in Buenos Aires in 1916.

In 1930 or just after, Mr. Sayer left his juvenile writings behind him and joined the London General Press, a feature agency in Bouverie Street, London, E.C. He later formed the London International Press at Wheatsheaf House, Carmelite Street, E.C., but resigned from the board in 1936 and joined the British Lion Film Company.

Meanwhile readers had been bombarding the editor of the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY for more stories by "Pierre Quiroule", for his long absence had been greatly missed. "Quiroule", however, no longer being available to write fresh stories of Granite Grant and Mademoiselle Julie, Len Pratt, the editor of the S.B.L., decided to let another popular writer, Francis Warwick, who wrote under the name of "Warwick Jardine", write fresh stories featuring these characters - with, of course, the full permission of W. W. Sayer. In fairness to Mr. "Jardine", an excellent writer in his own field (he was the son of the famous Sydney Warwick), this new assignment had a great handicap, for he just could not write about someone else's creation.

The first story of Grant and Julie by "Warwick Jardine" appeared in No. 403 (2nd series) of the S.B. Library, entitled "The Crime in Park Lane". The second story "The Man from Tokio", had already been written, and was in process of being published in No. 409 of the Library, when a storm of protest broke out from readers who knew at once that the first new "Quiroule" story was written by a 'substitute' writer. To satisfy his readers there was now only one thing the editor of the S.B.L. could do, and that was to publish the old stories by "Pierre Quiroule"; and this he did at once, commencing with No. 416, "Dead Man's Diary", a story which had appeared some twelve years earlier under the title of "The Secret of the Frozen North" (1st series No. 163).

In 1938/39 "Pierre Quiroule" did relent a little by writing a few more original stories for the S.B. Library, although two of them had

already appeared in a much shorter form in the old Union Jack. In a sense, however, it would be wrong to regard these two stories as re-prints, for the plots were extended, dialogue added and Julie - who for some strange reason had never appeared in the U.J. stories - brought into the new versions. I have already said that in 1936 Mr. Sayer joined the British Lion Film Co. as a script writer, and it is probably by reason of this that he was able to get a film made adapted from one of his stories. This picture was called "Sexton Blake and the Hooded Terror," and was an adaptation of the S.B.L. story "The Mystery of No. 13 Caversham Square." There were quite a few films being made featuring Sexton Blake at that period, but the above was easily the most popular one. Its premiere was at the Ritz Cinema, Leicester Square. George Curzon played Sexton Blake, Greta Gynt played Julie and David Farrar (who took the part of Sexton Blake in later films) played Grant. Pedro was played by himself! It is most interesting to note that, last but not least, the villain was played by the late Tod Slaughter, who, I have been told by several of his former friends, was a great lover of all the Sexton Blake stories and claimed to have read every Blake story ever published. He also had a very large collection of Blake material.

There has been much mention in the past of Miss Dorothy L. Sayers and her interest in Sexton Blake; in fact, the inside cover of a modern S.B.L. contains a quotation from her to the effect that she regarded Sexton Blake as part of the national folk lore. Proof of more than just a casual interest in Blake is that in 1936, at which time Miss Sayers was editor of the London "Evening Standard" short story feature, she specially asked "Pierre Quiroule" to write a story for her featuring Blake, Tinker and Pedro. This appeared on 23 November, 1936 and was probably unique in the history of 'short' stories for it took up no less than three full pages! The title was "Sexton Blake Solves It," and the story was reprinted in papers all over the world. Mr. Sayer showed me, with great pride, a copy of the "Ceylon Observer"

containing the story and illustrated by Phil Mendozzer, an artist I know quite well. This Blake story has not, to my personal knowledge, since been reprinted, and I imagine it would be extremely difficult to obtain a copy today. Appearing, as it does, in a series alongside a serial by world-famous H. G. Wells, one can see the type of class required in writing for the "Evening Standard" feature, and "Pierre Quiroule" proved himself quite up to the task.

Just after the outbreak of World War II Mr. Sayer took over the hotel where Mr. Basil Reynolds met him in 1946, and was Mine Host to

countless thousands of people during his fourteen years stay there.

Mr. Sayer has written a number of hard-cover books, and for the benefit of readers who are desirous of collecting them they are listed as follows:-

(Under the name of W. W. Sayer) for Wright and Brown Ltd.

Sellers of Death. 1940
The Nemesis Club. 1946
Mine Sinister Host. 1948

(Under the name of Pierre Quiroule) for Mellifont Press, Dublin.

The Hour of Recognition. 1932
The Silhouette Symbol. 1935
Secret of the Circle. 1935
The Golf Links Mystery. 1935
The Circle of Death. 1936

(Under the name of Pierre Quiroule) for Nelson Thrillers.

The Painted Death. 1935

In concluding this article on my meeting with "Pierre Quiroule" I should like to point out that our editor, Eric Fayne, was in contact with Mr. Sayer some fifteen years ago - at which time they had much correspondence. (Readers who are fortunate enough to have a copy of C.D. No. 4 can look it up.) Thus, Eric must take full credit for unmasking "Pierre Quiroule" as it were. Readers who have copies of his stories in the S.B.L. 1st series will see the initials W.W.S. in the right-hand bottom corner at the end of the story. Suspecting that they stood for the real name of the author, Eric traced "Quiroule" through that clue.

Like Eric, I have always considered Mr. Sayer's stories to be of a much higher standard than really required for the S.B.L. His English is beyond criticism and his stories - whether they dealt with the Frozen North or in the Wilds of India - have always been remarkably accurate in detail, although he has never been to those places. He can recall, with some amusement, Len Pratt once remarking that someone who had read one of the tales of India exclaimed "Good Gad! This chap must have spent many years in the country." (This was probably Anthony Parsons, who was a Captain in the Indian Army.)

Of his contemporary fellow-writers of Blake stories, Mr. Sayer had a great regard for Anthony Parsons, and was very friendly with

G. H. Teed and Donald Stuart.

And now, in closing this little article, it only remains for me to echo the thoughts of thousands of old readers of "Pierre Quiroule" stories and say: Thank you, Mr. Sayer, for your superb Sexton Blake stories!

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SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY TITLES AND AUTHORS (2nd series)
(Continued)

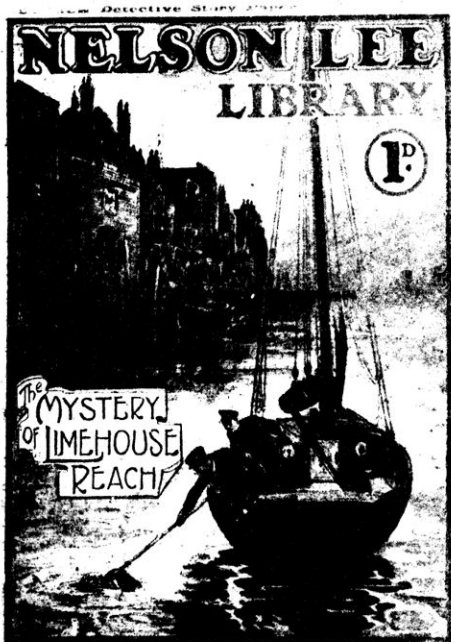
No. 509	The Case of the Night Club Queen	(R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 510	Murder on the Boat Express	(Mark Judson)	R. Hardinge
No. 511	Blind Man's Secret	(Dr. Ferraro)	R. C. Armour
No. 512	The Mystery of the Albanian Avenger	(G. Grant, Mille Julie)	W. W. Sayer
	(Reprint of 2nd series No. 18)		
No. 513	The Case of the Murdered Wedding Guest		F. Warwick
No. 514	The Mystery of the Creek Exile		H. H. C. Gibbons
No. 515	The Terror of Thunder Creek		W. E. Stanton-Hope
No. 516	The Crime on the Quay		W. J. Bayfield
No. 517	Dead Man's Evidence	(R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 518	The Mystery of the African Mine	(M. Judson)	R. Hardinge
No. 519	The Victim of the Girl Spy		M. B. Dix
No. 520	The Secret of the Tong		A. Edgar
No. 521	Murder on the 4th Floor	(R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 522	The Secret of the Steppes		H. H. C. Gibbons
No. 523	The Lost Expedition	(G. Grant, Mille Julie)	W. W. Sayer
	(Reprint of 1st series No. 303)		
No. 524	The Crime at the Crown Inn		P. A. Clarke
No. 525	The Murder at Hermit's Cottage		R. Hardinge
No. 526	The Secret of the Balkan Heiress		R. C. Armour
No. 527	The Old Bailey Mystery		W. J. Bayfield
No. 528	The Barber's Shop Crime		W. Shute
No. 529	The Mystery of the Murdered Blonde	(R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 530	The Seaside Crime		F. Warwick
No. 531	The Case of the Brass Bound Trunk		H. H. C. Gibbons
No. 532	The Ethiopian's Secret	(G. Grant, Mille Julie)	W. W. Sayer
	(Reprint of 2nd series No. 45)		
No. 533	The Ex-Serviceman's Secret		R. Hardinge
No. 534	The Crime of Gunga Dass	(Gunga Dass)	R. C. Armour
No. 535	The Girl Who knew too Much	(R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 536	The Island of the Guilty		G. H. Teed
	(Reprint of 2nd series No. 41)		
No. 537	The Secret of the Sale Room	(M. Judson)	R. Hardinge
No. 538	The Man with the Glaring Eyes		W. J. Bayfield
No. 539	The Stage Door Crime		H. H. C. Gibbons
No. 540	The £100,000 Insurance Swindle	(B. Charon)	W. W. Sayer
	(Reprint of 2nd series No. 40)		
No. 541	The Trail of the Dope Chief		A. J. Hunter
No. 542	The Case of the Three Absconding Swindlers		R. C. Armour
No. 543	The Seaside Cafe Crime	(D. Tallon)	F. Warwick
No. 544	The Secret of the Identification Parade		W. Shute

No. 545	The Bells of Doom	G. Verner
No. 546	The Mystery of the Old Curiosity Shop	H. H. C. Gibbons
No. 547	The Motor Show Mystery	R. Hardinge
No. 548	The Dictators Secret	G. H. Teed
No. 549	Crook Cargo (Capt. Dack)	A. J. Hunter
No. 550	The Trail of the White Turban (G. Dass)	R. C. Armour
No. 551	The Victim of the Thieves Den (R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 552	The Dockyard Mystery	W. E. Stanton-Hope
No. 553	The Case of the Long Firm Frauds (Plummer) (Reprint of 2nd series No. 30)	J. W. Bobin
No. 554	The Talisman Quest	H. H. C. Gibbons
No. 555	The Friest's Secret	W. J. Bayfield
No. 556	The Mystery of the Three Acrobats (R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 557	The Secret of the Dental Surgeon (M. Judson)	R. Hardinge
No. 558	The Mystery of X. 20 (R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 559	The Midnight Lorry Crime	E. S. Brooks
No. 560	The Riddle of Dead Man's Mine	P. A. Clarke
No. 561	The Unknown Menace	G. Verner
No. 562	The Case of the Murdered Financier	J. Creasey
No. 563	The Blackmailed Baronet (Reprint of 2nd series No. 36)	H. E. Hill
No. 564	The Man from Moscow	H. H. C. Gibbons
No. 565	The Mystery of the Murdered Sentry (R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 566	The Terror of the Tenements	G. N. Phillips
No. 567	The Secret of the Dead Convict	M. B. Dix
No. 568	The Case of the Man who Never Slept (Reprint of 2nd series No. 9)	G. A. Evans
No. 569	The Mystery of No. 13 Caversham Square (G. Grant, Mdlle Julie)	W. W. Sayer
No. 570	The Victim of the Cult (Fay Lorne)	F. Warwick
No. 571	The Riddle of Five Needle Creek	W. J. Bayfield
No. 572	The Crime in the Kiosk (R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 573	The Coronation Mystery	H. H. C. Gibbons
No. 574	The Crime on the Heath	C. Vernon Frost
No. 575	The Bond Street Raiders (R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 576	The Curse of the Santyres (Reprint of 2nd series No. 26)	G. A. Evans
No. 577	Raffles v Sexton Blake (Raffles)	P. Atkey
No. 578	The Prisoner of Lost Island (Capt. Dack)	A. J. Hunter
No. 579	The Tattooed Triangle (R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 580	The Man They Could Not Convict	R. Hardinge
No. 581	The Riddle of the Sunken Garden	G. Verner
No. 582	The Mystery of the Swanley Viaduct (Zenith) (Reprint of 2nd series No. 13)	G. N. Phillips
No. 583	The Man from Italy (R. Purvale)	J. G. Brandon
No. 584	The Devil's Own	G. M. Bowman
No. 585	The Crime on the Promenade (Capt. Dack)	A. J. Hunter
No. 586	The Charity Fund Mystery	H. H. C. Gibbons

COMING SOON

"DO YOU REMEMBER 'THE BOYS' LEADER'" - by F. Addington Symonds.

NELSON LEE COLUMN



HOW THEY
BEGAN

NO. 11

Here we have the cover of the very first issue of Nelson Lee Library, dated 12th June, 1915.

This popular paper seems to have passed through four different phases in its history, until it was amalgamated with the Gem in August, 1933. A total of 948 issues.

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COMING SOON in
C.D.

A New Long

Complete St.

HANDSOME PHOTO-BUTTON OF GENERAL FRENCH GIVEN AWAY.

Frank's Story.

Old Boys' Book Club

MIDLAND

Meeting held July 25th, 1961

With apologies from John Tomlinson, Joe Marston and George Chatham and others being away on holiday, there were nine members only at this meeting in the Stratford Room, Arden Hotel. We were all upset to hear that Beryl Porter had been rushed to hospital again after a bad fall.

It was late when the programme got under way and a nice reading by Midge Corbett from Magnet No. 1030 (Edgar Bright series) was the first item. An encounter between Sir Hilton Popper and Gosling was not helped by Bunter who brought his ventriloquism into it to make relations more estranged between the two elderly gentlemen. The intervention of Dr. Locke helped to smooth matters. Frank Richards' humour at its best. As promised last month, Ted Davey continued his talk on Coker of the Fifth. With such a subject as the "Chump of Greyfriars" and Ted at the top of his form, this was a very absorbing part of the improvised programme. The proposed joint club conference suggested for next year and the probability of it being held at Matlock met with approval and it is fairly certain that it will be well supported by Midland Club.

HARRY BROSTER - Secretary.

(Editor's Note: At the time of the above meeting, the Midland Club was looking forward to welcoming the return of Mrs. Beryl Porter, at an early date. Club members were stunned a week later, to learn of the death of Mrs. Porter. An obituary appears on another page.)

NORTHERN

Meeting held Saturday, 12th August, 1961

There was an attendance of 18 members when Chairman Geoffrey Wilde opened the meeting at 7 p.m. Geoff had heard from our old colleague Tony Potts that he hopes to be with us at our next meeting.

After routine business had been disposed of Gerry Allison gave us the sad news of the death of Beryl Porter. This was a considerable shock to all of us, the more so because our last news of Beryl had been fairly encouraging. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Tom in his sad loss, which is our loss too, for Tom and Beryl have attended several of our meetings and made themselves exceedingly well liked.

Also from the Midland Section came the news that Norman Gregory was in hospital. We all wish Norman a quick recovery and a speedy return home.

On the brighter side, the advertisement for a copy of Magnet 884 (recently lost in the post) had born fruit, and this has been replaced. Jim Hepburn had also written us a cheerful letter which we were very pleased to receive, and Eric Fayne writes informing us that he hopes to attend one of our meetings in the near future. We also heard from two other old and esteemed friends, Tom Hopperton and Roger Jenkins.

Ron Hodgson then reported on his recent visit to John Gunn, and Jack Wood told us of the new St. Frank's story in Film Fun.

This month's reading of 'Rivals and Chums' was given for the first time by one of our lady members, Molly Allison, and very well she did it too. This month's episode included the long-awaited match between Highcliffe and Greyfriars, and the refreshments arrived just as she reached half-time! We badly wanted to hear the result of the match so Molly obligingly continued her reading after the interval.

Another enjoyable meeting terminated at 9.15 p.m. Next meeting, Saturday, 9th September.

FRANK HANCOCK - Secretary.

LONDON

Another happy and jolly meeting took place on Saturday, August 12th, at the Glebe, Blackheath, host Horace Roberts. A 'baker's dozen' were in attendance, quite good for the holiday month. Horace the ideal host and good to see him do some business with his Nelson Lee Library at one side of the room and Roger busy with the Hamiltonian section on the other side. Millicent Lyle's 'Castaways' were excellent, a well written description with number eight, last but not least, Dame Kebble's cat. With Millicent selecting Bob Cherry, after four members have now given their selections, Bob is top of the poll. A very fine and humorous reading by Roger Jenkins, a chapter or two about Rookwood from a 'Schoolboys' Own Library' we greatly enjoyed. A fine 'Collectors' Digest' quiz conducted by Bill Hubbard was won by Len Packman, Josie Packman was third and Don Webster separated these two by being second.

'Old Boys' Books' Don Webster had compiled an excellent quiz on this subject and Bill Hubbard was the easy winner; seconds were Len Spicer and Len Packman, fourths Roger Jenkins and Ray Hopkins. Josie still suffering with her voice, thus Don doing all the talking from the chair.

Only sad note was the tribute paid to the passing of Beryl Porter, all members present expressing their deepest sympathy.

With generous thanks to the host, Horace Roberts and Miss Blackman for an enjoyable occasion it was callover and farewell until we meet again on Sunday, September 17th at 40 Ellersmere Road, Dollis Hill, London, N.W. 10. Host, Bob Blythe. Kindly inform host if attending.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

AUSTRALIA

Club members received a very cordial welcome when they gathered at the home of Mrs. and Mrs. J. Donald at Strathfield for a special meeting on Thursday, August 17th.

The chairman, Syd Smyth opened proceedings at 8 p.m. and the few items of business received swift attention, as those present were all anxious to get on with the main feature on the programme, the greeting to our friends at Merseyside.

After financial matters have been settled the overseas mail was passed around for reading and this occupied a pleasant fifteen minutes.

Then the members gathered around to say their few words ... one attack of temperament by the tape recorder and several attacks of stage fright delayed the trial run but eventually all was ready to cut the tape.

The Sydneysiders were pleased to hear the greeting sent to them by Jack Murtagh and feel sure this pleasure will be shared by his friends overseas. Then came the dreaded moment of facing up to the microphone themselves - strangely enough instead of the imagined ordeal it proved to be quite an enjoyable experience and several members had to be forcibly restrained from a repeat performance on the other side of the tape when their enthusiasm carried them away.

Supper was served by Mrs. Donald after the tape was safely packed away and the evening ended on a most hilarious note with some of the members declaring they'd never

have recognised their own voices ...we had lots of fun making this goodwill greeting and hope that the pleasure will snowball as the tape goes on its journey from our friends at Merseyside to the other hobby folk throughout England.

B. PATE - Secretary.

WANTED: GEMS 407; most issues between 412 and 500; most issues between 772 and 842; 935, 953, 956, 975, 980, 984, 985, 986, 989, 990, 992, 993, 998, 1129, 1150. MAGNETS 45, 52, 134, 141, 195, 205, 238, 239, 277, 318, 319, 344, 345, 346, 347, 353, 357, 358, 400, 417, 422, 435, 439, 446, 469, 719, 752, 773, 809, most issues between 812 and 890, 900, 921, 924, 925, 936, 938, 940, 942, 943, 946, 949, 951, 965, 967, 988, 996. POPULARS 183, 190, 370, 385, 396, 462, 455, 466, 474. ERIC FAYNE, EXCELSIOR HOUSE, GROVE ROAD, SURBITON, SURREY.

WANTED: S.O.L.'s Nos. 60 and 68. Modern Boy No. 239. Magnet Nos. 829, 862 - 865, 867 868, 869, 874, 877, 879, 884, 893, 896, 897, 900. DR. R. WILSON, 100 BROOMFIELD ROAD, GLASGOW, N.1.

MY DUPLICATE No. 1 Magnet in good condition offered in exchange for the following numbers 28, 39, 618, 768, 771, 773, 933, 1066 or £1 offered for each. Write: LOFTS, 56 SHERINGHAM HOUSE, ST. MARYLEBONE, LONDON, N.W.1.

WANTED: S.O.L.'s 42, 258. Nelson Lee No. 130 (old series). Your price paid plus postage. The advertiser has some S.O.L.'s, Nelson Lees, Gems and Magnets for exchange only. BRIAN HOLT, BRITISH EMBASSY, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND.

Need MAGNETS 400, 420, 455, 470, 482, 491, 492, 496, 497, 507, 525, 526, 530 - 533, 537, 539, 540, 541, 561, 570, 573, 600, 617, 649, 652, 672, 682, 748, 753, 760, 761, 763, 808, 899, 960 - 963, 970, 1011, 1013, 1027, 1028, 1035, 111. also S.O.L.'s 169, 170, 206, 228, 258, 268. Have Magnets 429, 590, 736, 741, Popular 370 for exchange. THOMPSON, 53 WALLASEY PARK, BELFAST, 14.

FOR SALE: Emergency newspapers, issued during the General Strike of 1926. The British Gazette (H.M. Stationery Office), Nos. 3 (two copies), 4, 5, and 6; The Times No. 44263 dated May 5, 1926; The British Worker (published by the T.U.C.), No. 5 - slightly damaged. All others in good condition, mimeographed, published during Printers' strike 1920. Connoisseurs' pieces, What offers? WRITE BOX '8', c/o. Collectors Digest.

THAT POPULARITY CONTEST

By Brian Doyle

Eric Fayne has invited me to say just how I managed to prophesy the final order of the Popularity Contest and thereby win the £5 prize. First, I must say how delighted I was - and honoured - to learn that I had been awarded first prize. I can honestly say that it's the first time I've ever won anything in my life (unless you can count a rather mangy-looking toy dog I won at a fair when I was 12!)

Now, as Johnny Bull might say, down to brass tacks...

The first five, as you will recall, ran: 1. Harry Wharton, 2. Billy Bunter, 3. H. Vernon-Smith, 4. Bob Cherry, 5. Sexton Blake. Why Harry Wharton first? Because, I think, he is more human and really believable than many other characters. He has his faults as well as his virtues and this makes him all the more interesting (like so many more of Charles Hamilton's character, of course). But after all Wharton has been the king-pin of so many fine stories too.

It was a near thing, in my own mind, between Wharton and Bunter. Then I thought: "Well, I've heard so many people say that Bunter was all right but wasn't there a bit too much of him?" This set me thinking, and I eventually came to the conclusion that, much-loved as the Owl of the Remove is, the majority of people would rather read a dramatic series featuring Harry Wharton. I remembered that the most popular Magnet series were the "Wharton - Rebel" series. And knowing that the "Magnet" is the most popular boys' paper in our circle I thought that a great many readers would therefore place Wharton first and Bunter second - and prove that although B.B. is the most famous Greyfriars character he isn't, quite, the most popular.

Most Magnet readers love a strong, dramatic series and, next to the Wharton - Rebel" stories, who figures in the best of this category? Our old friend, Herbert Vernon-Smith, naturally. He was my own Number One in the Personal Choice list and I know I wouldn't be far out if I put him fairly high up in the general list. Everyone seems to enjoy the Bounder's scrapes and escapes. So in went Vernon-Smith at Number 3.

While most readers were thinking about popularity what other name would at once spring to mind? The cheery, loyal, rumbustious Bob Cherry, of course. Not much doubt that Bob would be high up in the lists. So I put him at Number 4.

Getting this far I paused and reflected. So far all my estimated choices were Magnet characters. But what about Sexton Blake? He had a very large following, I knew. I was a fan of his myself. Surely he would receive a large proportion of votes. "Yes," I thought, "but not quite as many as those four Magnet characters..." So I thought Number 5 would be a fair place to put our old friend from Baker Street.

Need I go further? I don't think so. The rest of my choices followed roughly on these lines and I don't want to bore readers by describing my mental struggles blow by blow.

All I can say, is that I enjoyed working out my entry tremendously and I'm sure everyone else did too. Congratulations to Eric Payne and Les Rowley for organising the contest so well.

In the meantime, it's no good any of you chaps asking me to cash my £5 postal order down at Mrs. Mimble's so that I can buy you all doughnuts and gingerpop. It's too late. I've given myself a treat and spent the cash on a long run of "Strand Magazines," beautifully bound and in immaculate condition. Containing most of my namesake's inimitable Sherlock Holmes stories with Sidney Paget's original illustrations. So there

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YOURS SINCERELY

(Interesting items from the Editor's post-bag)

BENJAMIN G. WHITER (London): Re the Chesterfield gathering and the statement that the other papers apart from Hamiltoniana, Blakiana and Lee do not get much space. I suggest that the critics write articles and features themselves. Apart from Bill Lofts and Gerry Allison, the rest seldom write anything for publication in C.D. This goes, too, for Story Paper Collector, most of the articles and features in that excellent publication being written by the same people, month after month, and most of these being members of the London Club.

If more of the less popular papers have to be mentioned in C.D. I suggest once again that the critics kindly write and submit articles and features for publication.

Re the reader who would like to borrow Sexton Blake material from the clubs; years ago the London Club had a miscellaneous section, run by Charlie Wright. It ceased to function owing to lack of support.

Finally, I think you do an excellent job in trying to please everyone, as editor of Collectors' Digest.

(Every month a book award is made for the Star Letter of the month. The award this month goes to the writer of the above. See EDITORIAL for comment on subject matter of the letter. - ED.)

JOHN JARMAN (Mansfield Woodhouse) I read with great interest W.J.A. Hubbard's article on "Bending of a Twig" by Desmond Coke, as the author was born and lived for many years in this village, and I feel a sort of reflected (if somewhat fatuous) glory in the fact.

ALEX PARSONS (Tranmere): I thought the Rebel series the finest Frank Richards ever produced. His skill in slowly alienating Wharton from his form-mates, and then gradually winning them back by the sheer strength of Wharton's character certainly bears the master touch. I never cared for Handy. I knew several "Handy's" at school and always thought them a menace. Their readiness to punch noses never endeared them to me.

GERALD ALLISON (Menston) Re your paragraph in the August Editorial, I would mention that the Northern Section Library contains hundreds of Union Jacks, S.B.L's, etc. In fact we have practically every paper and book available for borrowing, including a complete file

of Collectors' Digests, and all the C.D. Annuals. "The Man Who Came Back" was delightful. A lovely bit of fantasy - worthy of the Holiday Annual at its best.

TOM HOPPERTON (Scarborough): Everyone must agree that C.D. has improved beyond any reasonable expectation, and in catering to so many different trends it is probably impossible to satisfy everyone. If you attempt to vary the accustomed menu too much, it will probably upset more than it gratifies. But there is a simple way out of the difficulty. We already have the Annual at Christmas. Without aiming at anything as elaborate as that, would it be possible to issue Spring, Summer and Autumn Specials, of ordinary C.D. size? I realize that it would throw an added strain on the poor editor, but I should be glad to know what you - and others - think of the idea.

(The 'poor Ed' likes the idea immensely, and we have, in fact, been toying with the idea of Double Numbers occasionally. There are, of course, certain factors to be considered before it could be put into practice, but we should be glad to know whether readers would like the idea of an occasional Double Number, or, alternatively, an occasional 'Extra'. - ED.)

GEORGE BURGESS (Romsey): I thought "Man Who Came Back" very cleverly written (more of these stories, please), and the Dick Turpin cover is the best I have seen on C.D. since I have been a reader. The drawings of Dick and his friends are most praise-worthy, with the gravestones and gallows thrown in.

STAN KNIGHT (Cheltenham) I was particularly interested in Mr. Thurbon's article, where he mentions the very story, for information of which I advertised in the C.D. Annual a while back - "The Wolf Patrol" by John Finnemore. He says these stories were printed in the Champion in 1912-13, which is news to me. Harry Broster has the only copy of this name that I have heard about until now, and he very kindly loaned it to me a few months ago.

(Mr. Thurbon writes us as follows: "I was horrified to see that I had carelessly mixed up the two stories. John Finnemore's "Wolf Patrol" appeared in one of the A.P. papers and later in a B.F.L. The stories in the 1912-13 Champion were about the "Green Plover" patrol.)

IAN DAVEY (Whitley Bay): I have never seen any mention in C.D. of "Little Folks". You may have covered it comprehensively in the past before I started to get C.D., but I would be interested to find out. I have a battered copy of "Little Folks" of 1932 and an even more battered one of 1895. The stories in them were very good, mainly school stories for both boys and girls, and I remember in 1932 an excellent school tale called "Michael Allenby" by John Brearley.

My favourite stiff-covered school tales are by an author I have not seen mentioned in C.D. - R. A. H. Goodyear. I always preferred his stories to those of Michael Poole, Gunby Hadath, Cleaver, Bird, etc. I remember he had a long obituary in "The Times", but I can't remember much more about it now. Could we have some facts about Goodyear, please?

ROBERT McCABE (Dundee): No surprise to find Wharton topping the poll, but Bunter getting second place was. I thought Mr. Quelch would have received more votes. Next to Wharton, he is my favourite character.

CHRISTOPHER LOWDER (Cradley): Belated hearty congratulations on the magnificent July C.D. It was perfect. I was glad to see Dick Turpin on the Cover in August. It was a marvellous picture with wonderful detail. Only one disappointment - the absence of

Tom King from the insets. Still, it's hard to please everyone.

Talking of covers - where is Bob White? His character portrait of the Rio Kid was a fine piece of work. Can't we have more? Why don't we have articles on Dick Turpin and Buffalo Bill? The pre-war Biggles yarns in Modern Boy are good subject matter, too.

FROM WITHIN
By R. J. Godsave

It has been said that books will not deliver their treasures without some co-operation on the part of the reader. Those who enjoy books most are those who cultivate the active use of their imaginations and all books worth reading demand an effort of imagination so that we can hear, see and feel all that the author describes.

Anyone can begin to write of something that has happened. But it is exceedingly difficult to begin so effectively that the reader is immediately immersed in the story and eager to follow to the end. It is, of course, equally difficult to end the plot of a story successfully. I would say that the essential characteristic of a story is a good plot with people or things that are alive.

The long runs of the Hamiltonian papers and the Nelson Lee are proof that Hamilton and Brooks both possessed this gift. It is, of course, equally true of other authors.

Sometime ago, I read the Compton series of the Magnet and was rather fascinated by the account of Mr. Quelch following Vernon-Smith to Pegg one wet afternoon. The description was so realistic that I could almost hear, see and feel the rain falling. A description of a wet afternoon must be almost as difficult as the painting of a wine glass on an oil painting.

On the other hand, the surrounding countryside of St. Frank's is more real and detailed to me than that of Greyfriars. That the mental pictures built up by the readers must vary to an enormous degree is obvious, and some images fit in better than others. I must confess that my mental picture of the village of Bellton was nothing like that depicted by Briscoe in his delightful sketches.

With these few examples it can be seen that some of the quality of the stories depends upon the reader. For until a book is read it is non-existent. The moment it is appreciated it leaps into life and lives in the reader.

FOR SALE - NELSON LEES - all series. State wants or ask for List.
S.A.E. please - HORACE V. ROBERTS, 12 Clairview Road, Streatham,
LONDON, S.W.16.

Mr. J. MERRILLS, of Canada, who is collecting KNOCKOUT, writes about the difficulties caused by the absence of serial numbers. We agree most strenuously and would like to know why this absurdity has come about. Are the new papers merely coy about their ages? Age, i.n. a paper, used to be a matter of pride.
