

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOLUME 22

No. 253

"A TEST OF CHIVALRY!"

A Magnificent Long, Complete Story of School Life in this issue!



A PREFECT SEPARATES THE FIGHTERS!

(An Exciting Incident in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale Contained in this Issue.)

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this wasn't the first time it appeared in the Boys' Friend Lib. I don't have a complete list of the latter, but when I check papers out of the Hamiltonia or Nelson Lee Libraries, I always go through and write down in my list if the BFL is advertised. So that I have discovered that "Cloyne of Claverhouse" by Wally Hammond (no less) appears in No. 242 of the BFL dated June 1930 (it ran as a serial the previous June-August in 1929, so this was a pretty quick reprinting,) and in this edition, Wally Hammond was given as the author. A year later in July 1931, appeared, "Captain of Claverhouse," also by Wally Hammond (which sounds as though it too might have been reprinted from a "Modern Boy" serial). According to my incomplete list, the latter was reprinted as No. 680 of the BFL in July 1939, one month after the appearance of the second reprinting of "Cloyne" which appeared as No. 676. Both 1939 reprints were authorless. Rather odd that they didn't use one of those editorial names the AP was so fond of using.

BILL LOFTS (London): RALPH ROLLINGTON of old boys books fame in the Victorian era was without doubt the great Uncle of Marjorie Allingham. His real name was John W. Allingham, and Miss Allingham in her lifetime wrote in great detail, sending his famous book as well to Derek Adley. Herbert J. Allingham was the father of Marjorie, who wrote all those serials in the comics. Herbert J. and Herbert I feel sure are the same person. A myth has grown on making them two persons. Although Richard Starr wrote as "Richard Essex" he was not Lewis Essex the Blake writer. The latter is the writer's real name, and who wrote as "Louise Essex" in girls' papers.

I was rather surprised that Mr. Starr did not mention his sister Mrs. N. Murch, who as "Vera Lovel" wrote many boys stories in YOUNG BRITAIN. Quite often the brother and sister wrote the whole paper between them. A really wonderful old gentleman is Mr. Starr, and I feel sure everyone will wish to still hear from him for many more years.

RAYMOND TAYLOR (Wolverhampton): You have done it once again! A perfect Annual! The article "The Comic Papers of Yesteryear" is worth the whole cost of the Annual. It is a wonderful job. I remember the old "Scraps" quite well. I always think that Henderson's gave great value for money especially with Nuggets, Comic Life, and Lot-O-Fun.

FOR SALE: Several dozen excellent copies of FUN & FICTION 3/6 each. Several dozen excellent copies of THE DREADNOUGHT (not including Greyfriars) 3/- each. Postage extra. S.A.E., first, please. WRITE:

ERIC FAYNE, EXCELSIOR HOUSE, GROVE RD., SURBITON, SURREY.

not sure which product it was used to advertise, though I have a sneaking feeling it may have been Nestle's Milk. There must be a moral in that, somewhere.

Another transparency told of "a bright young thing" and "a Bravington ring." Finally, the tramway company popped in a plug of its own:

"If you walk in the winter you may catch a chill;
Then you'll go to the doctor and ask for a pill.
At the end of the quarter, he'll charge you - HE WILL!
Why not travel by tram - and save pill and bill?"

Then, of course, there was Mr. Drage, whose gimmick was that he laid your lino without charge. A music hall artist - I forget his name - had in his repertoire a song entitled "Breakfast in Bed." One of the jingles was:

"Mr. Drage lays your lino quite free so 'tis said --
And then lays an egg for your breakfast in bed."

I often wonder what became of Mr. Drage.

Maybe the advertising of yesterday was no more effective than that of the Wailing Sixties. It was far less wasteful. Does any housewife in the country buy a single extra egg because she is advised to "go to work on an egg?" Is any additional milk sold because thousands of pounds are spent on a "pinta" scheme? The way to sell more milk and eggs would be to reduce the cost, and one way to reduce the cost would be by cutting out the advertising.

THE BEST DAY OF THE WEEK:

Sunday should be. But, of course, it wasn't when we were kids. Probably our favourite day was Saturday, because it was market day and we could buy second-hand copies of our favourite papers cheaply. And there was no school. And there was no homework, for we had done our homework the night before, if we were good boys like you, or left it till Sunday, if we were lazy boys like me. And, perhaps, we went to the pictures in the evening, and then went home to make toasted cheese in front of the fire.

When I was a boy, I think that none of my favourite papers came out on Saturday. Goodness knows why, for Saturday was pocket-money day. Later on, the Magnet was issued on Saturday, but by that time my schooldays were over, I fancy.

When I was small, Monday was a bitter-sweet day. It was back to school after the week-end - but it was also Magnet and Boys' Friend day. Tuesday brought the Popular and the Butterfly and the School-girls' Own, according to taste. Earlier on, the Penny Popular had

promised a prize, and Gerry Allison was to let him know who had won his Quiz.

Supper now followed, and then the party was over, and with good wishes exchanged, members and friends departed homewards.

Next meeting, Saturday, the 13th January, 1968.

M. L. ALLISON
Hon. Sec.

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LONDON

There was a festive atmosphere at Hume House on the third Sunday of December. Len Packman and helpmate Josie had adorned the walls with photos and other interesting items of the collecting hobby. President John Wernham had brought along ample supplies of "Billy Bunter's Picture Book," "A Strange Secret," Hamiltonian Museum Booklet and The Surbiton 1966 Souvenir book of photographs.

Frank Vernon-Lay brought along supplies of the six Merlin books, copies of "The Best of Magnet and Gem" and the new Penguin book of Comics. These were all displayed on the table near where chairman Don Webster conducted the proceedings. A facsimile copy of Magnet number one was also on display, all books on sale, a sight to gladden the hearts of all hobbyists.

At the other end of the room, Roger Jenkins and Bob Blythe were doing excellent business in their two sections of the library. After the president of the club had addressed the meeting, Brian Doyle propose a hearty vote of thanks to him for his latest opus and this was seconded by Bob Acraman. The 1968 publication is now under consideration but no particulars as to what it will be were given.

Brian Doyle gave particulars of happenings in the realms of Sexton Blake. A picture strip in the "Valiant," and several other items in the world of commerce, this after a visit to Fleetway House. Roger Jenkins told of a Magnet that the club library needed being given by P. C. Herne, whilst an anonymous donor had given £5 to the funds of the library.

A London Underground Railway quiz was conducted by Bob Whiter; maps were supplied and twelve questions asked. Roger Jenkins was the winner with ten correct answers and three with eight were seconds, these being Bert Staples, Reuben Godsave and Len Packman. Len Packman gave a good review of the six Merlin books and the Penguin Book of Comics.

Roger Jenkins read a couple of chapters from Magnet number 1244, "The Ghost of Mauleverer Towers." Len Packman read extracts from club newsletter No. 4 and Tom Wright obliged with a St. Sam's story entitled

title was changed to The Dreadnought and Boys' War Weekly.

Early in 1915, Hinton found himself at the helm, and yet another event occurred in the paper's strange history. It became just "The Dreadnought" again, though readers were informed that the short-lived "Boys' Journal" was now amalgamated with it. Oddest factor of all, the original numbering was now resumed, and my issues of February onwards are numbered from 140. The green cover gave way to a white one, and this change may have been due to a dye shortage. Hinton introduced reprints of the old Magnet stories, together with illustrations by Chapman on the cover, and by now The Dreadnought was very much a Companion Paper. Hinton, perhaps, banked on the popularity of Greyfriars to save The Dreadnought, but in June 1915, after 159 issues, it was amalgamated with the Boys' Friend, which was a euphemistic way of saying that it died a natural death.

Readers with a larger collection than my own can possibly fill in the details of this "strange eventful history."

My browse over the Dreadnought has, however, solved one problem. In this year's Annual I refer to two stories which appeared at the end of 1917 in the Boys' Friend 3d Library. These were entitled "Scorned by the School" and "The Cad of the School" in which twins - one a bad boy, one a good boy - changed schools and identities. I mentioned that I always had the impression that these tales were written by Henry St. John, and I fancied that one twin went to St. Basil's. I added that the theme was very much like that of E. S. Brooks stories of the Castleton twins, one of whom went to St. Frank's, the other to St. Jim's, and this latter plot was so similar to that of the two stories in the B.F.L. that I wondered whether Brooks could have been responsible for all the lot.

That problem is solved. In a Dreadnought for 1913, I find the last instalment of a serial "The Cad of the School," and the writer is Robert Comrade, who was, of course, Brooks. The twins were Len and Dave (their surnames do not appear in the instalment), and their schools were St. Otwell's and Sandcliffe.

Actually, a further question is left. There were two stories - one devoted to each twin. "Cad of the School" was in The Dreadnought. It seems certain that the sister story "Scorned by the School" must have been appearing in some other paper at the same time.

In C.D. Christmas Number, Danny referred to a reprint of a Cliveden tale by Charles Hamilton in the Christmas 1917 Number of The Penny Popular. Danny observed that his brother Doug believed that a Cliveden series had appeared in The Boys' Realm or The Boys' Herald. Well, I find that the Cliveden series by Charles Hamilton ran in the

NEWS OF THE CLUBS

MIDLAND

Meeting held November 28th, 1967

There was another good meeting with ten members attending.

An interesting and lively talk by Ray Bennett was featured, review of Boys' Papers considered from an adult point of view. Ray displayed specimens of all the papers he discussed for inspection by members present.

The Anniversary Number brought by Tom Porter this month was Nelson Lee Library (Old Series) No. 547 "The Cellar of Secrets," one of the very famous series featuring Edwy Searles Brooks strange character, Ezra Quirke. The date was 28th November, 1925 and the book was 42 years old to the day.

The Collector's Item was also of great interest being No. 17 of The Monster Library, "Prisoners of the Mountains," a reprint from Nelson Lee Library (Old Series) Nos. 304 to 311. This story was also adapted for reprinting in The Schoolboys' Own Library in Nos. 336 and 339 in 1938.

After the coffee break Ted Davey gave a grand talk on his favourite Greyfriars' character, Horace Coker. Ted affirmed that Horace Coker was a much funnier character than Bunter whom he considered over-drawn. Ted said that he considered Charles Hamilton had created a masterpiece of characterisation in Coker. This talk finished with a reading in which Coker featured.

The usual arrangements were made for the Christmas Party and the chairman's advice was that members refrain from eating for a few hours prior to attending. Last year a great deal of food was left over.

The meeting will be held on December 19th, almost a week before Christmas, at the Birmingham Theatre Centre.

JACK BELLFIELD
Correspondent.

NORTHERN

Christmas Party held Saturday, 9th December, 1967

As the local members arrived early through streets crisp with snow to prepare the tea for our 18th Annual Christmas Party their thoughts were on our more distant friends and wondering how they were managing the journey to Leeds. However, five o'clock saw 27 sitting

DANNY'S DIARY

January 1918

There is a simply marvellous new series in the Magnet. The first story was called "In Another's Place." Vernon-Smith, following a row with Mr. Quelch, puts out in a boat in bad weather. He is rescued near the Hawk's Cliff by a boy named Tom Redwing. The Bounder wants his father to help Redwing in some way, for Redwing's father has been lost in a torpedoed ship. However, Redwing has met Leonard Clavering. Clavering is a ward of Sir Hilton Popper, and there is a dream of a chapter about a conversation between Sir Hilton and the Head. Sir Hilton is sending Clavering to Greyfriars, and Sir Hilton and the orphan have never met. Clavering wants to go in the army; Redwing would love to go to Greyfriars. The two exchange identities.

Next week, in "Clavering of the Remove," Smithy, when he leaves the Sanatorium, is astonished to find that the new boy Clavering is really Tom Redwing who saved him from the sea. But Smithy keeps the secret.

Then, in "The Whip Hand," Ponsonby and Co are ragging Bunter, and Clavering comes to Bunter's aid. But Ponsonby feels sure that he had met Clavering before when his name wasn't Clavering. But the Bounder bribes Jerry Hawke to part with a paper which Ponsonby had signed over a gambling debt, and so the Bounder holds a trump card and Clavering's secret is safe for the present.

Then, most astonishingly, came a story which was nothing to do with the Clavering series, though Clavering came into it quite a lot. I found it a dry tale, even though it was a bit startling. The senior, Courtney, rescued Valence from the Cross Keys which had been hit by an incendiary bomb from a German plane - and Courtney dies. It was called "A Very Gallant Gentleman."

Yarmouth has been bombarded by German destroyers, and six people were killed. There was an air raid on London by 15 planes. 58 people were killed, most of them being in one building at the time.

In the night of the 17th January there was another great blaze in the sky, and it reminded me of last August Bank Holiday when the Dartford tram depot burned down. This time it was the Training Ship "Warspite," moored off Greenhithe, on fire, but all the boys were saved.

The Gem has been really poor this month. I sigh when I think of what it used to be. The only thing which saved it from being a wash-out was the start of "The St. Jim's Gallery."

The first story of the year was a long one "The St. Jim's Cadets."

So Redwing never suffered at the hands of the substitute writers in the way that Talbot of St. Jim's did. Talbot had great potentialities which were never fully exploited by Charles Hamilton. Other writers took over Talbot and Marie Rivers and overwhelmed them with sentiment. But neither they nor even Charles Hamilton himself could ever conceive Talbot other than involved with some tedious, repetitive echo from his past.

The sailor's son was on an even keel right from the start and throughout his long history. It is, perhaps, uncertain whether Hamilton recognized the potentialities of Redwing at the time of creating him. If he did, then the Clavering series was the result of an extremely clever piece of thinking. Before the Bounder of Greyfriars could become the close chum of a poor sailor boy, that same poor sailor boy had, in some credible way, to become a Greyfriars man. So the Clavering series provided the means of bringing the young sailor into the Remove at Greyfriars.

Clavering, who looked much older than his years, wanted to join the army, but his guardian had destined him for Greyfriars. He happened to meet Redwing, who was anxious to have the benefit of a good education. The two boys changed places. Clavering went into the army as Private Redwing, and Redwing went to Greyfriars and became Clavering of the Remove. This was a delightful, well-balanced series with nothing to strain the credulity. By 1918, the army was not particular as to the men it received; there was no bothering about credentials. And Redwing's father was away, probably lost at sea in a torpedoed vessel. There was nothing far-fetched in the exchange of identities. By the time that the series had run its course, the Bounder was devoted to Redwing in his own rather tortuous way, and the millionaire's son was able, by methods cleverly thought out by the author, to ensure that the sailor's son was a fixture at Greyfriars.

The series, as time passed, about the scholarship which, anonymously, Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith founded, with conditions favourable to Redwing's winning it, made fascinating reading. And, inevitably, the time came when the volatile Bounder flung the facts into the face of his sensitive sailor friend. The Bounder redeemed himself, and saved the friendship, in a splendid tale, little-quoted to-day, entitled "Fallen Fortunes."

The history of this remarkable and endearing friendship was thorny. Early in the Golden Age of the Magnet came the wonderful South Seas series which brought the superb Soames into the saga. With an overture of what looked like a final quarrel between the millionaire's son and the sailor boy, Redwing set off in search of a treasure which had been bequeathed to him by a distant, roving relative. And when he found the treasure, he was, at long last, able to pay his own fees at Greyfriars. A sequel to the South Seas series was told at Christmas time, with the Bounder and Redwing kidnapped and held in a cave - stories which were well-told, colourful, and exciting but which lacked the real Christmas atmosphere as much as some of those Gem Christmas Numbers of which Roger Jenkins spoke last month.

A decade and more passed by before the Bertie Vernon series graced a golden summer. This one has not the same appeal as some of the others, though it was carefully planned and told. The Bounder was too callous to win any sympathy by this time. His brittle harshness irritated, and marred the stories. But Redwing was portrayed brilliantly, and he alone placed the series in the above-average class.

The author, in fact, never failed to ring the ball with Redwing, whether the boy from Hawkscliff was wondering whether he was really good enough to fill the place in the team which the Bounder was demanding for him, or whether he was feeling that he no longer liked the fellow who was supposed to be the Bounder but had dropped all the Bounder's old wild habits.

My own view is that Tom Redwing was one of Charles Hamilton's greatest character studies. At the time of his death, the author was half-way through yet another story concerning Redwing and the Bounder. It was not a great one, though it had its moments as far as he went. Just how he would have finished it, not one of us can know. We do know, for certain, that he would never have wound it up in the welter of sentimentality which spread over it in the closing chapters which were tacked on to what the creator

boy, Tom Burton, who is nicknamed "The Bo'sun." He speaks like a sailor, and is an interesting character. Rummy to have two new nautical characters this month - one in the Magnet and the other in the Nelson Lee.

With the first issue of the year, the Boys' Friend was reduced in size again, and now only has 8 pages. All except the front page is in very small print, like that in the Penny Popular. Dad says I must have eyes like a links, whatever a links is.

There is a new Mornington series, and it looks like being a long one with a barring-out coming on. The first story was "Under the Shadow," and this was sombre but very good indeed. In a snow fight, Lattrey throws at Mornington a snowball containing a stone, and Morny is badly hurt. When he goes to deal with Lattrey in his study, Lattrey panics and hits Morny with a brass candlestick. Mornington is blinded by the blow.

In the next story, "Condemned by the School," all Rookwood is expecting that Lattrey will be expelled. But the father of Lattrey knows the dark secret of Dr. Chisholm's brother, and the Head is being blackmailed by Mr. Lattrey who is a kind of private detective. In "Expelled by the Form," the Fourth, led by Jimmy Silver, take matters into their own hands, and turn Lattrey out, neck and crop. Finally, in "The Rookwood Mutineers," Lattrey returns, and Dr. Chisholm finds himself with a seething rebellion on his hands. The Head is between the devil and the deep blue sea.

In the Cedar Creek series, "Saved by the Sergeant" related how Sergeant Lasalle of the Mounties came to Cedar Creek and exposed Gunten and Kellar as the two who tampered with Miss Meadows' advertisement.

In "The Outcast of Cedar Creek," Kellar received a belting and Gunten was expelled - but Gunten was woeful at being turned out of the school. Then in "Gunten's Last Chance," Gunten staged a fake rescue of Miss Meadows, and she allowed him to return. But Frank Richards & Co found out Gunten's trick, and made him confess, but he confessed in such a way that Miss Meadows still forgave him.

Last tale of the month, "The Chow of Cedar Creek" was a new Chinese boy, Yen Chin. This was a spiffing tale, and I loved it.

"A VERY GALLANT GENTLEMAN"

In 1967 we came upon quite a number of Golden Jubilees, and that Danny of ours made sure that we missed none of them. Now, in January 1968, we reach two more. The arrival of Tom Redwing, which is dis-

cheery maxim that a blow in the fresh air was the cure for all worries, looking down the sights of a rifle at a possible human target was just too much for me. Far be it for me to criticise the world's greatest writer of school stories, but it is my honest opinion that the most famous of fictional schoolboy characters ever created were as out of place in these foreign adventures as aspidistras in a chromium-plated flower shop. To use a phrase of Charles Hamilton's, they were as large as life and twice as natural.

I've no doubt there are hundreds of C.D. readers who revel in the foreign travels; they do well to do so. From what I've read of them I can well understand this. As adventure stories they are excellent; as stories of my favourite schoolboys they are - to me - poor stuff. This isn't meant as a criticism but as a statement of taste, and is a fact only in this context. One is entitled to one's own taste, poor though it may be.

I thought what I choose to call Charles Hamilton's true adventure stories very readable indeed. With regard to the Cedar Creek tales nothing was far-fetched and, as the school seemed to serve only as a backcloth, almost anything in the adventure line was acceptable and regarded by me as 'fictional fact.' I haven't seen a Boys' Friend for years but I'm sure I would enjoy these stories as much as I did in the far off days. The Rio Kid is still the best of my badmen even though modern historians of the Old West inform us that there were no Robin Hoods of the plains. I like to think that a Rio Kid was an exception. "King of the Islands" was clean, fresh stuff with an exhilarating charm. One could hear the trade winds whistling in the shrouds, and smell the tang of the Pacific. I've just finished re-reading one of these tales and think it very convincing indeed. In my very humble opinion had Charles Hamilton never become famous for his school stories he would have certainly made the top line in boys' adventure. This particular yarn was extremely well written, as, no doubt, all of them were. But, for what I consider true adventure, give me those lovely summer holidays on the river; the flash of oars in the sunshine; distant shouts across the rippling Sark or Rhyll; secret picnics on Popper's Island; hiking and caravanning days on the rolling downs; crackle of the camp fire and the babble of a nearby stream; smell of burning wood and frying "sosses;" barrings-out and the breaking of bounds; the bookie's clutches and the timely rescue; dormitory fights and the whirr of wheels on the hard white road; the long evening shadows across the cricket pitch; the visitors needing one to tie, two to win; the last over, the last ball; a mighty hit going for six; a darting figure leaping into the air; smack! How's that? Those never to be forgotten

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.....

By Walter Webb

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED AND REPRODUCTION WITHOUT PERMISSION STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. You turned back the paper cover of your favourite boys' periodical, ran your eyes down the title-page, and the words hit you right between them as they reached the bottom. They sought to deter the budding young author - or any old one, for that matter - from sitting down at his typewriter with another author's work beside him, copying it almost word for word, and palming it off onto some unsuspecting editor as his own original work.

Something like this was alleged to have occurred many years ago, when a reader protested that a story published in the U.J. had been read by him in another paper. The editor admitted that he had been the victim of a fraud, but had published the story in good faith. One significant factor, however, gave rise to a great deal of uncertainty as to the truth of this explanation; for, despite the name of the author having been given to preceding stories, this one was published anonymously. There seemed no earthly reason why that particular story should not have followed the same pattern and been given a name of authorship, and in view of what transpired in the S.B.L. much later, it was probably published in the full knowledge that it was its second printing.

The recent exchange of views on the reprinting of a Ladbroke Black story copies - and I stress the word "copied," for no other can apply - by Lewis Jackson, was only one of several instances of this sort of thing occurring during the editorship of Mr. L. Pratt. The instances are recorded in the SEXTON BLAKE CATALOGUE, where, besides the name of Lewis Jackson, those of John G. Brandon, Donald Stuart, and W. J. Bayfield are given as having re-written earlier stories by authors dead and buried many years before. It is apparent that those stories were copied with full editorial approval. It is likely, too, that the transcribers received more money for reviving them than the original authors got for writing them. But they could no more lay claim to authorship than a man finding another's wage packet could claim ownership of it.

thoroughly extrovert as Edward Oswald Handforth?

But in those early days we did not criticise them - we accepted them, liking or disliking without reservation. It seems to me unfair - and quite untrue - to state that in effect the decline of the Nelson Lee was due to the declining popularity of Handforth - the 'star performer who failed to attract an audience.' It was only when the format of the Lee changed - through no fault of Edwy's - and the stories became superficial; when our beloved old characters were replaced by new, and far less acceptable ones, that the Nelson Lee took its tumble. Schoolboys are conservative; they dislike change and I firmly believe that if the Nelson Lee had continued to give them what they wanted, instead of the 'chopping and changing' which went on during its later years, it would have outlived all its contemporaries.

In the very early Lees Handforth's character was, I must confess, not particularly endearing. He was represented as not only a buffoon but (dare I say it?) something of a bully. But as the Nelson Lee got into its stride, the character of Edward Oswald mellowed and became what it remained up to the final chapter of the Nelson Lee - arrogant, opinionated, reckless, impulsive; but also with a new warmth and generosity.

Len Wormull states, in referring to the Death of Church series (and I agree that this was one of the finest stories Brooks ever wrote, that 'for one brief moment we saw Handy as a character with warmth and compassion - a side to his nature which we were never to see again.' I think many Lee-ites would be able to prove that this was merely an extension of Handy's character, not a reversal or a flash-in-the-pan. Throughout the reign of the Nelson Lee, his concern for his two friends Church and McClure (and for any of his companions who might be in trouble) was sincere and unaffected. During the Sports Mad series he actually tried to 'crock' himself so that Church could take his place at Lord's, and it was Handy who defended Harry Gresham when he was branded as a coward by the rest of the school. These stories - and many others which showed Handy in a compassionate light - were written prior to the Death of Church.

As I said, it is easy to look back with the critical eye of middle-age. But I think criticism should be fair. If, as Len Wormull states, the decline of the Nelson Lee was due to too much Handforth, wouldn't Edwy Searles Brooks have sensed this and acted accordingly? A true writer has his fingers always on the pulse of his public and right to the time changing editorial policy finally made Edwy's job impossible, he gave his readers what they wanted.

I think, up to the end, they still wanted Handy.

this period, was in failing health, and the editor of the S.B.L. may have been moved to help an old contributor financially by digging a story from the archives, getting a member of his staff to alter a few names here and there, and pay the author as for an original story. If so, in commiseration for the author, and in commendation of a friendly editor's kindly action, together with memories of many enjoyable hours spent following the adventures of the author's famous characters, I absolve from further criticism, and withdraw any implications I may have made in the course of this article. The helping hand is an instrument of peace and good-will that could be used more often in times when its appearance gets less and less frequent. Not only domestically; not only politically; but internationally, as well.

But further criticism there must be. Not so much of the official records as the way they are being misapplied. I agree that the person paid for the work should be accepted as the author - but only up to the point where it is clear that payment and authorship are coincidental. When the identity of the real author is obvious, then, whether he was paid for the story by the A.P., or not, he should be given the credit, or otherwise, for the story he has written.

Bill Lofts's insistence that the person paid for the story must be accepted as having written it, has cast doubts on the authenticity of articles published years ago, so it is poetic justice that one of his own should come under the same cloud of uncertainty. In "From Information Received...No. 4, C.D. No. 128, page 206, Bill, writing of Gilbert Chester, says...."not long after leaving school he trained to be a dentist.... Remember U.J. No. 979, "The Case of the Bond Street Dentist"? This was a case of Chester 'ghosting' for Andrew Murray."

By virtue of the crisp American style, so characteristic of all Chester's work, there is no doubt that he wrote the story. But the official records show Murray as having been paid for it, and so, on the documentary evidence which, to Bill, is conclusive proof that Murray wrote it, he must be accepted as the author. Except to re-affirm that the word 'author' can only be applied to the person actually writing the story, any further comment would be superfluous.

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A HUMBLE GIFT OF A GREAT MAN

By Arthur V. Holland

Sexton Blake is a very remarkable man in every way, his list of gifts as outlined by numerous writers of his chronicles are legion. However, upon reading a vintage number of Sexton Blake Library No. 7 N.S. (31/7/25) by R. C. Armour, I was delighted with a simple doggerel Blake composed as he rode a donkey along a dusty track in Egypt. We

mysterious activities of digging at midnight have lent a sinister aspect to the comic happenings in the foreground, turns out to be merely an archeologist digging for Roman relics.

So Lady Honoria, whose early appearance in the series suggests that a continuous thread of comic relief will be running throughout the whole series, tends to peter out long before the end to make way for the more exciting and serious adventures of the St. Frank's boys in their search for the Roman relics. And find them they do, despite further interference from the gang of London toughs which almost results in death for Nipper, Sir Montie Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson.

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THE EXCITING METAMORPHOSIS OF REGGIE PITT

by Jim Cook

Reginald Pitt was a unique character. In the world of literature it will be difficult to find his equal for I have never come across a similar dramatic and intense figure as interesting and compelling. And right from the beginning when he first arrived at St. Frank's you felt his strong personality at once even though he was "not on our side."

The mental image we got at Pitt's introduction to St. Frank's was of a smallish boy in Etons, slim and dark. His hair was dark and his eyes were dark also. His somewhat thin features had a sallow aspect, but he seemed healthy enough for all that. Thus Edwy gives us our first glimpse of a character we will never forget.

Perhaps it was something of a gamble reforming Pitt for in the first place it wasn't necessary and in the second a junior with such a strong individuality could prove to be too powerful to change. This really did happen with Brooks' treatment of Fullwood for the former leader of Study A remained with us for quite a long time in his original moulding even though we journeyed in sympathy with him in his uphill fight to shake off the old habits and acquaintances.

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JACK OVERHILL

FOR SALE: Lovely Red Magnets No. 289, 290, 291. £1 per copy. 1d White Magnets: 398 "Lancashire Lad's Luck"; 399 "Champion of the Oppressed"; 400 the notorious "Sunday Crusaders" 12/6 each. Blue Gems 365 "Herr Schneider's Secret" excellent copy 12/6. 398 "Mason's Last Match" pretty good copy 12/6. 370 "A Split in the School" rougher cover 10/-. 342 "St. Jim's Caravanners" good copy but coupon cut out of front cover 10/-. White 1d Gems: 482,484,485,492,497,498,499. 7/6 per copy. The entire final year of the Gem, bound in two lovely volumes: £6 per volume.

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mysterious activities of digging at midnight have lent a sinister aspect to the comic happenings in the foreground, turns out to be merely an archeologist digging for Roman relics.

So Lady Honoria, whose early appearance in the series suggests that a continuous thread of comic relief will be running throughout the whole series, tends to peter out long before the end to make way for the more exciting and serious adventures of the St. Frank's boys in their search for the Roman relics. And find them they do, despite further interference from the gang of London toughs which almost results in death for Nipper, Sir Montie Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson.

THE EXCITING METAMORPHOSIS OF REGGIE PITT

by Jim Cook

Reginald Pitt was a unique character. In the world of literature it will be difficult to find his equal for I have never come across a similar dramatic and intense figure as interesting and compelling. And right from the beginning when he first arrived at St. Frank's you felt his strong personality at once even though he was "not on our side."

The mental image we got at Pitt's introduction to St. Frank's was of a smallish boy in Etons, slim and dark. His hair was dark and his eyes were dark also. His somewhat thin features had a sallow aspect, but he seemed healthy enough for all that. Thus Edwy gives us our first glimpse of a character we will never forget.

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this period, was in failing health, and the editor of the S.B.L. may have been moved to help an old contributor financially by digging a story from the archives, getting a member of his staff to alter a few names here and there, and pay the author as for an original story. If so, in commiseration for the author, and in commendation of a friendly editor's kindly action, together with memories of many enjoyable hours spent following the adventures of the author's famous characters, I absolve from further criticism, and withdraw any implications I may have made in the course of this article. The helping hand is an instrument of peace and good-will that could be used more often in times when its appearance gets less and less frequent. Not only domestically; not only politically; but internationally, as well.

But further criticism there must be. Not so much of the official records as the way they are being misapplied. I agree that the person paid for the work should be accepted as the author - but only up to the point where it is clear that payment and authorship are coincidental. When the identity of the real author is obvious, then, whether he was paid for the story by the A.P., or not, he should be given the credit, or otherwise, for the story he has written.

Bill Lofts's insistence that the person paid for the story must be accepted as having written it, has cast doubts on the authenticity of articles published years ago, so it is poetic justice that one of his own should come under the same cloud of uncertainty. In "From Information Received...No. 4, C.D. No. 128, page 206, Bill, writing of Gilbert Chester, says...."not long after leaving school he trained to be a dentist.... Remember U.J. No. 979, "The Case of the Bond Street Dentist"? This was a case of Chester 'ghosting' for Andrew Murray."

By virtue of the crisp American style, so characteristic of all Chester's work, there is no doubt that he wrote the story. But the official records show Murray as having been paid for it, and so, on the documentary evidence which, to Bill, is conclusive proof that Murray wrote it, he must be accepted as the author. Except to re-affirm that the word 'author' can only be applied to the person actually writing the story, any further comment would be superfluous.

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A HUMBLE GIFT OF A GREAT MAN

By Arthur V. Holland

Sexton Blake is a very remarkable man in every way, his list of gifts as outlined by numerous writers of his chronicles are legion. However, upon reading a vintage number of Sexton Blake Library No. 7 N.S. (31/7/25) by R. C. Armour, I was delighted with a simple doggerel Blake composed as he rode a donkey along a dusty track in Egypt. We

thoroughly extrovert as Edward Oswald Handforth?

But in those early days we did not criticise them - we accepted them, liking or disliking without reservation. It seems to me unfair - and quite untrue - to state that in effect the decline of the Nelson Lee was due to the declining popularity of Handforth - the 'star performer who failed to attract an audience.' It was only when the format of the Lee changed - through no fault of Edwy's - and the stories became superficial; when our beloved old characters were replaced by new, and far less acceptable ones, that the Nelson Lee took its tumble. Schoolboys are conservative; they dislike change and I firmly believe that if the Nelson Lee had continued to give them what they wanted, instead of the 'chopping and changing' which went on during its later years, it would have outlived all its contemporaries.

In the very early Lees Handforth's character was, I must confess, not particularly endearing. He was represented as not only a buffoon but (dare I say it?) something of a bully. But as the Nelson Lee got into its stride, the character of Edward Oswald mellowed and became what it remained up to the final chapter of the Nelson Lee - arrogant, opinionated, reckless, impulsive; but also with a new warmth and generosity.

Len Wormull states, in referring to the Death of Church series (and I agree that this was one of the finest stories Brooks ever wrote, that 'for one brief moment we saw Handy as a character with warmth and compassion - a side to his nature which we were never to see again.' I think many Lee-ites would be able to prove that this was merely an extension of Handy's character, not a reversal or a flash-in-the-pan. Throughout the reign of the Nelson Lee, his concern for his two friends Church and McClure (and for any of his companions who might be in trouble) was sincere and unaffected. During the Sports Mad series he actually tried to 'crock' himself so that Church could take his place at Lord's, and it was Handy who defended Harry Gresham when he was branded as a coward by the rest of the school. These stories - and many others which showed Handy in a compassionate light - were written prior to the Death of Church.

As I said, it is easy to look back with the critical eye of middle-age. But I think criticism should be fair. If, as Len Wormull states, the decline of the Nelson Lee was due to too much Handforth, wouldn't Edwy Searles Brooks have sensed this and acted accordingly? A true writer has his fingers always on the pulse of his public and right to the time changing editorial policy finally made Edwy's job impossible, he gave his readers what they wanted.

I think, up to the end, they still wanted Handy.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.....

By Walter Webb

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED AND REPRODUCTION WITHOUT PERMISSION STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. You turned back the paper cover of your favourite boys' periodical, ran your eyes down the title-page, and the words hit you right between them as they reached the bottom. They sought to deter the budding young author - or any old one, for that matter - from sitting down at his typewriter with another author's work beside him, copying it almost word for word, and palming it off onto some unsuspecting editor as his own original work.

Something like this was alleged to have occurred many years ago, when a reader protested that a story published in the U.J. had been read by him in another paper. The editor admitted that he had been the victim of a fraud, but had published the story in good faith. One significant factor, however, gave rise to a great deal of uncertainty as to the truth of this explanation; for, despite the name of the author having been given to preceding stories, this one was published anonymously. There seemed no earthly reason why that particular story should not have followed the same pattern and been given a name of authorship, and in view of what transpired in the S.B.L. much later, it was probably published in the full knowledge that it was its second printing.

The recent exchange of views on the reprinting of a Ladbroke Black story copies - and I stress the word "copied," for no other can apply - by Lewis Jackson, was only one of several instances of this sort of thing occurring during the editorship of Mr. L. Pratt. The instances are recorded in the SEXTON BLAKE CATALOGUE, where, besides the name of Lewis Jackson, those of John G. Brandon, Donald Stuart, and W. J. Bayfield are given as having re-written earlier stories by authors dead and buried many years before. It is apparent that those stories were copied with full editorial approval. It is likely, too, that the transcribers received more money for reviving them than the original authors got for writing them. But they could no more lay claim to authorship than a man finding another's wage packet could claim ownership of it.

cheery maxim that a blow in the fresh air was the cure for all worries, looking down the sights of a rifle at a possible human target was just too much for me. Far be it for me to criticise the world's greatest writer of school stories, but it is my honest opinion that the most famous of fictional schoolboy characters ever created were as out of place in these foreign adventures as aspidistras in a chromium-plated flower shop. To use a phrase of Charles Hamilton's, they were as large as life and twice as natural.

I've no doubt there are hundreds of C.D. readers who revel in the foreign travels; they do well to do so. From what I've read of them I can well understand this. As adventure stories they are excellent; as stories of my favourite schoolboys they are - to me - poor stuff. This isn't meant as a criticism but as a statement of taste, and is a fact only in this context. One is entitled to one's own taste, poor though it may be.

I thought what I choose to call Charles Hamilton's true adventure stories very readable indeed. With regard to the Cedar Creek tales nothing was far-fetched and, as the school seemed to serve only as a backcloth, almost anything in the adventure line was acceptable and regarded by me as 'fictional fact.' I haven't seen a Boys' Friend for years but I'm sure I would enjoy these stories as much as I did in the far off days. The Rio Kid is still the best of my badmen even though modern historians of the Old West inform us that there were no Robin Hoods of the plains. I like to think that a Rio Kid was an exception. "King of the Islands" was clean, fresh stuff with an exhilarating charm. One could hear the trade winds whistling in the shrouds, and smell the tang of the Pacific. I've just finished re-reading one of these tales and think it very convincing indeed. In my very humble opinion had Charles Hamilton never become famous for his school stories he would have certainly made the top line in boys' adventure. This particular yarn was extremely well written, as, no doubt, all of them were. But, for what I consider true adventure, give me those lovely summer holidays on the river; the flash of oars in the sunshine; distant shouts across the rippling Sark or Rhyl; secret picnics on Popper's Island; hiking and caravanning days on the rolling downs; crackle of the camp fire and the babble of a nearby stream; smell of burning wood and frying "sosses;" barrings-out and the breaking of bounds; the bookie's clutches and the timely rescue; dormitory fights and the whirr of wheels on the hard white road; the long evening shadows across the cricket pitch; the visitors needing one to tie, two to win; the last over, the last ball; a mighty hit going for six; a darting figure leaping into the air; smack! How's that? Those never to be forgotten

boy, Tom Burton, who is nicknamed "The Bo'sun." He speaks like a sailor, and is an interesting character. Rummy to have two new nautical characters this month - one in the Magnet and the other in the Nelson Lee.

With the first issue of the year, the Boys' Friend was reduced in size again, and now only has 8 pages. All except the front page is in very small print, like that in the Penny Popular. Dad says I must have eyes like a links, whatever a links is.

There is a new Mornington series, and it looks like being a long one with a barring-out coming on. The first story was "Under the Shadow," and this was sombre but very good indeed. In a snow fight, Lattrey throws at Mornington a snowball containing a stone, and Mornny is badly hurt. When he goes to deal with Lattrey in his study, Lattrey panics and hits Mornny with a brass candlestick. Mornington is blinded by the blow.

In the next story, "Condemned by the School," all Rookwood is expecting that Lattrey will be expelled. But the father of Lattrey knows the dark secret of Dr. Chisholm's brother, and the Head is being blackmailed by Mr. Lattrey who is a kind of private detective. In "Expelled by the Form," the Fourth, led by Jimmy Silver, take matters into their own hands, and turn Lattrey out, neck and crop. Finally, in "The Rookwood Mutineers," Lattrey returns, and Dr. Chisholm finds himself with a seething rebellion on his hands. The Head is between the devil and the deep blue sea.

In the Cedar Creek series, "Saved by the Sergeant" related how Sergeant Lasalle of the Mounties came to Cedar Creek and exposed Gunten and Kellar as the two who tampered with Miss Meadows' advertisement.

In "The Outcast of Cedar Creek," Kellar received a belting and Gunten was expelled - but Gunten was woeful at being turned out of the school. Then in "Gunten's Last Chance," Gunten staged a fake rescue of Miss Meadows, and she allowed him to return. But Frank Richards & Co found out Gunten's trick, and made him confess, but he confessed in such a way that Miss Meadows still forgave him.

Last tale of the month, "The Chow of Cedar Creek" was a new Chinese boy, Yen Chin. This was a spiffing tale, and I loved it.

"A VERY GALLANT GENTLEMAN"

In 1967 we came upon quite a number of Golden Jubilees, and that Danny of ours made sure that we missed none of them. Now, in January 1968, we reach two more. The arrival of Tom Redwing, which is dis-

So Redwing never suffered at the hands of the substitute writers in the way that Talbot of St. Jim's did. Talbot had great potentialities which were never fully exploited by Charles Hamilton. Other writers took over Talbot and Marie Rivers and overwhelmed them with sentiment. But neither they nor even Charles-Hamilton himself could ever conceive Talbot other than involved with some tedious, repetitive echo from his past.

The sailor's son was on an even keel right from the start and throughout his long history. It is, perhaps, uncertain whether Hamilton recognized the potentialities of Redwing at the time of creating him. If he did, then the Clavering series was the result of an extremely clever piece of thinking. Before the Bounder of Greyfriars could become the close chum of a poor sailor boy, that same poor sailor boy had, in some credible way, to become a Greyfriars man. So the Clavering series provided the means of bringing the young sailor into the Remove at Greyfriars.

Clavering, who looked much older than his years, wanted to join the army, but his guardian had destined him for Greyfriars. He happened to meet Redwing, who was anxious to have the benefit of a good education. The two boys changed places. Clavering went into the army as Private Redwing, and Redwing went to Greyfriars and became Clavering of the Remove. This was a delightful, well-balanced series with nothing to strain the credulity. By 1918, the army was not particular as to the men it received; there was no bothering about credentials. And Redwing's father was away, probably lost at sea in a torpedoed vessel. There was nothing far-fetched in the exchange of identities. By the time that the series had run its course, the Bounder was devoted to Redwing in his own rather tortuous way, and the millionaire's son was able, by methods cleverly thought out by the author, to ensure that the sailor's son was a fixture at Greyfriars.

The series, as time passed, about the scholarship which, anonymously, Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith founded, with conditions favourable to Redwing's winning it, made fascinating reading. And, inevitably, the time came when the volatile Bounder flung the facts into the face of his sensitive sailor friend. The Bounder redeemed himself, and saved the friendship, in a splendid tale, little-quoted to-day, entitled "Fallen Fortunes."

The history of this remarkable and endearing friendship was thorny. Early in the Golden Age of the Magnet came the wonderful South Seas series which brought the superb Soames into the saga. With an overture of what looked like a final quarrel between the millionaire's son and the sailor boy, Redwing set off in search of a treasure which had been bequeathed to him by a distant, roving relative. And when he found the treasure, he was, at long last, able to pay his own fees at Greyfriars. A sequel to the South Seas series was told at Christmas time, with the Bounder and Redwing kidnapped and held in a cave - stories which were well-told, colourful, and exciting but which lacked the real Christmas atmosphere as much as some of those Gem Christmas Numbers of which Roger Jenkins spoke last month.

A decade and more passed by before the Bertie Vernon series graced a golden summer. This one has not the same appeal as some of the others, though it was carefully planned and told. The Bounder was too callous to win any sympathy by this time. His brittle harshness irritated, and marred the stories. But Redwing was portrayed brilliantly, and he alone placed the series in the above-average class.

The author, in fact, never failed to ring the bell with Redwing, whether the boy from Hawkscliff was wondering whether he was really good enough to fill the place in the team which the Bounder was demanding for him, or whether he was feeling that he no longer liked the fellow who was supposed to be the Bounder but had dropped all the Bounder's old wild habits.

My own view is that Tom Redwing was one of Charles Hamilton's greatest character studies. At the time of his death, the author was half-way through yet another story concerning Redwing and the Bounder. It was not a great one, though it had its moments as far as he went. Just how he would have finished it, not one of us can know. We do know, for certain, that he would never have wound it up in the welter of sentimentality which spread over it in the closing chapters which were tacked on to what the creator

DANNY'S DIARY

January 1918

There is a simply marvellous new series in the Magnet. The first story was called "In Another's Place." Vernon-Smith, following a row with Mr. Quelch, puts out in a boat in bad weather. He is rescued near the Hawk's Cliff by a boy named Tom Redwing. The Bounder wants his father to help Redwing in some way, for Redwing's father has been lost in a torpedoed ship. However, Redwing has met Leonard Clavering. Clavering is a ward of Sir Hilton Popper, and there is a dream of a chapter about a conversation between Sir Hilton and the Head. Sir Hilton is sending Clavering to Greyfriars, and Sir Hilton and the orphan have never met. Clavering wants to go in the army; Redwing would love to go to Greyfriars. The two exchange identities.

Next week, in "Clavering of the Remove," Smithy, when he leaves the Sanatorium, is astonished to find that the new boy Clavering is really Tom Redwing who saved him from the sea. But Smithy keeps the secret.

Then, in "The Whip Hand," Ponsonby and Co are ragging Bunter, and Clavering comes to Bunter's aid. But Ponsonby feels sure that he had met Clavering before when his name wasn't Clavering. But the Bounder bribes Jerry Hawke to part with a paper which Ponsonby had signed over a gambling debt, and so the Bounder holds a trump card and Clavering's secret is safe for the present.

Then, most astonishingly, came a story which was nothing to do with the Clavering series, though Clavering came into it quite a lot. I found it a dry tale, even though it was a bit startling. The senior, Courtney, rescued Valence from the Cross Keys which had been hit by an incendiary bomb from a German plane - and Courtney dies. It was called "A Very Gallant Gentleman."

Yarmouth has been bombarded by German destroyers, and six people were killed. There was an air raid on London by 15 planes. 58 people were killed, most of them being in one building at the time.

In the night of the 17th January there was another great blaze in the sky, and it reminded me of last August Bank Holiday when the Dartford tram depot burned down. This time it was the Training Ship "Warspite," moored off Greenhithe, on fire, but all the boys were saved.

The Gem has been really poor this month. I sigh when I think of what it used to be. The only thing which saved it from being a wash-out was the start of "The St. Jim's Gallery."

The first story of the year was a long one "The St. Jim's Cadets."

NEWS OF THE CLUBS

MIDLAND

Meeting held November 28th, 1967

There was another good meeting with ten members attending.

An interesting and lively talk by Ray Bennett was featured, review of Boys' Papers considered from an adult point of view. Ray displayed specimens of all the papers he discussed for inspection by members present.

The Anniversary Number brought by Tom Porter this month was Nelson Lee Library (Old Series) No. 547 "The Cellar of Secrets," one of the very famous series featuring Edwy Searles Brooks strange character, Ezra Quirke. The date was 28th November, 1925 and the book was 42 years old to the day.

The Collector's Item was also of great interest being No. 17 of The Monster Library, "Prisoners of the Mountains," a reprint from Nelson Lee Library (Old Series) Nos. 304 to 311. This story was also adapted for reprinting in The Schoolboys' Own Library in Nos. 336 and 339 in 1938.

After the coffee break Ted Davey gave a grand talk on his favourite Greyfriars' character, Horace Coker. Ted affirmed that Horace Coker was a much funnier character than Bunter whom he considered over-drawn. Ted said that he considered Charles Hamilton had created a masterpiece of characterisation in Coker. This talk finished with a reading in which Coker featured.

The usual arrangements were made for the Christmas Party and the chairman's advice was that members refrain from eating for a few hours prior to attending. Last year a great deal of food was left over.

The meeting will be held on December 19th, almost a week before Christmas, at the Birmingham Theatre Centre.

JACK BELLFIELD
Correspondent.

NORTHERN

Christmas Party held Saturday, 9th December, 1967

As the local members arrived early through streets crisp with snow to prepare the tea for our 18th Annual Christmas Party their thoughts were on our more distant friends and wondering how they were managing the journey to Leeds. However, five o'clock saw 27 sitting

title was changed to The Dreadnought and Boys' War Weekly.

Early in 1915, Hinton found himself at the helm, and yet another event occurred in the paper's strange history. It became just "The Dreadnought" again, though readers were informed that the short-lived "Boys' Journal" was now amalgamated with it. Oddest factor of all, the original numbering was now resumed, and my issues of February onwards are numbered from 140. The green cover gave way to a white one, and this change may have been due to a dye shortage. Hinton introduced reprints of the old Magnet stories, together with illustrations by Chapman on the cover, and by now The Dreadnought was very much a Companion Paper. Hinton, perhaps, banked on the popularity of Greyfriars to save The Dreadnought, but in June 1915, after 159 issues, it was amalgamated with the Boys' Friend, which was a euphemistic way of saying that it died a natural death.

Readers with a larger collection than my own can possibly fill in the details of this "strange eventful history."

My browse over the Dreadnought has, however, solved one problem. In this year's Annual I refer to two stories which appeared at the end of 1917 in the Boys' Friend 3d Library. These were entitled "Scorned by the School" and "The Cad of the School" in which twins - one a bad boy, one a good boy - changed schools and identities. I mentioned that I always had the impression that these tales were written by Henry St. John, and I fancied that one twin went to St. Basil's. I added that the theme was very much like that of E. S. Brooks stories of the Castleton twins, one of whom went to St. Frank's, the other to St. Jim's, and this latter plot was so similar to that of the two stories in the B.F.L. that I wondered whether Brooks could have been responsible for all the lot.

That problem is solved. In a Dreadnought for 1913, I find the last instalment of a serial "The Cad of the School," and the writer is Robert Comrade, who was, of course, Brooks. The twins were Len and Dave (their surnames do not appear in the instalment), and their schools were St. Otwell's and Sandcliffe.

Actually, a further question is left. There were two stories - one devoted to each twin. "Cad of the School" was in The Dreadnought. It seems certain that the sister story "Scorned by the School" must have been appearing in some other paper at the same time.

In C.D. Christmas Number, Danny referred to a reprint of a Cliveden tale by Charles Hamilton in the Christmas 1917 Number of The Penny Popular. Danny observed that his brother Doug believed that a Cliveden series had appeared in The Boys' Realm or The Boys' Herald. Well, I find that the Cliveden series by Charles Hamilton ran in the

promised a prize, and Gerry Allison was to let him know who had won his Quiz.

Supper now followed, and then the party was over, and with good wishes exchanged, members and friends departed homewards.

Next meeting, Saturday, the 13th January, 1968.

M. L. ALLISON

Hon. Sec.

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LONDON

There was a festive atmosphere at Hume House on the third Sunday of December. Len Packman and helpmate Josie had adorned the walls with photos and other interesting items of the collecting hobby. President John Wernham had brought along ample supplies of "Billy Bunter's Picture Book," "A Strange Secret," Hamiltonian Museum Booklet and The Surbiton 1966 Souvenir book of photographs.

Frank Vernon-Lay brought along supplies of the six Merlin books, copies of "The Best of Magnet and Gem" and the new Penguin book of Comics. These were all displayed on the table near where chairman Don Webster conducted the proceedings. A facsimile copy of Magnet number one was also on display, all books on sale, a sight to gladden the hearts of all hobbyists.

At the other end of the room, Roger Jenkins and Bob Blythe were doing excellent business in their two sections of the library. After the president of the club had addressed the meeting, Brian Doyle propose a hearty vote of thanks to him for his latest opus and this was seconded by Bob Acraman. The 1968 publication is now under consideration but no particulars as to what it will be were given.

Brian Doyle gave particulars of happenings in the realms of Sexton Blake. A picture strip in the "Valiant," and several other items in the world of commerce, this after a visit to Fleetway House. Roger Jenkins told of a Magnet that the club library needed being given by P. C. Herne, whilst an anonymous donor had given £5 to the funds of the library.

A London Underground Railway quiz was conducted by Bob Whiter; maps were supplied and twelve questions asked. Roger Jenkins was the winner with ten correct answers and three with eight were seconds, these being Bert Staples, Reuben Godsave and Len Packman. Len Packman gave a good review of the six Merlin books and the Penguin Book of Comics.

Roger Jenkins read a couple of chapters from Magnet number 1244, "The Ghost of Mauleverer Towers." Len Packman read extracts from club newsletter No. 4 and Tom Wright obliged with a St. Sam's story entitled

not sure which product it was used to advertise, though I have a sneaking feeling it may have been Nestle's Milk. There must be a moral in that, somewhere.

Another transparency told of "a bright young thing" and "a Bravington ring." Finally, the tramway company popped in a plug of its own:

"If you walk in the winter you may catch a chill;
Then you'll go to the doctor and ask for a pill.
At the end of the quarter, he'll charge you - HE WILL!
Why not travel by tram - and save pill and bill?"

Then, of course, there was Mr. Drage, whose gimmick was that he laid your lino without charge. A music hall artist - I forget his name - had in his repertoire a song entitled "Breakfast in Bed." One of the jingles was:

"Mr. Drage lays your lino quite free so 'tis said --
And then lays an egg for your breakfast in bed."

I often wonder what became of Mr. Drage.

Maybe the advertising of yesterday was no more effective than that of the Wailing Sixties. It was far less wasteful. Does any housewife in the country buy a single extra egg because she is advised to "go to work on an egg?" Is any additional milk sold because thousands of pounds are spent on a "pinta" scheme? The way to sell more milk and eggs would be to reduce the cost, and one way to reduce the cost would be by cutting out the advertising.

THE BEST DAY OF THE WEEK:

Sunday should be. But, of course, it wasn't when we were kids. Probably our favourite day was Saturday, because it was market day and we could buy second-hand copies of our favourite papers cheaply. And there was no school. And there was no homework, for we had done our homework the night before, if we were good boys like you, or left it till Sunday, if we were lazy boys like me. And, perhaps, we went to the pictures in the evening, and then went home to make toasted cheese in front of the fire.

When I was a boy, I think that none of my favourite papers came out on Saturday. Goodness knows why, for Saturday was pocket-money day. Later on, the Magnet was issued on Saturday, but by that time my schooldays were over, I fancy.

When I was small, Monday was a bitter-sweet day. It was back to school after the week-end - but it was also Magnet and Boys' Friend day. Tuesday brought the Popular and the Butterfly and the School-girls' Own, according to taste. Earlier on, the Penny Popular had

this wasn't the first time it appeared in the Boys' Friend Lib. I don't have a complete list of the latter, but when I check papers out of the Hamiltonia or Nelson Lee Libraries, I always go through and write down in my list if the BFL is advertised. So that I have discovered that "Cloyne of Claverhouse" by Wally Hammond (no less) appears in No. 242 of the BFL dated June 1930 (it ran as a serial the previous June-August in 1929, so this was a pretty quick reprinting,) and in this edition, Wally Hammond was given as the author. A year later in July 1931, appeared, "Captain of Claverhouse," also by Wally Hammond (which sounds as though it too might have been reprinted from a "Modern Boy" serial). According to my incomplete list, the latter was reprinted as No. 680 of the BFL in July 1939, one month after the appearance of the second reprinting of "Cloyne" which appeared as No. 676. Both 1939 reprints were authorless. Rather odd that they didn't use one of those editorial names the AP was so fond of using.

BILL LOFTS (London): RALPH ROLLINGTON of old boys books fame in the Victorian era was without doubt the great Uncle of Marjorie Allingham. His real name was John W. Allingham, and Miss Allingham in her lifetime wrote in great detail, sending his famous book as well to Derek Adley. Herbert J. Allingham was the father of Marjorie, who wrote all those serials in the comics. Herbert J. and Herbert I feel sure are the same person. A myth has grown on making them two persons. Although Richard Starr wrote as "Richard Essex" he was not Lewis Essex the Blake writer. The latter is the writer's real name, and who wrote as "Louise Essex" in girls' papers.

I was rather surprised that Mr. Starr did not mention his sister Mrs. N. Murch, who as "Vera Lovel" wrote many boys stories in YOUNG BRITAIN. Quite often the brother and sister wrote the whole paper between them. A really wonderful old gentleman is Mr. Starr, and I feel sure everyone will wish to still hear from him for many more years.

RAYMOND TAYLOR (Wolverhampton): You have done it once again! A perfect Annual! The article "The Comic Papers of Yesteryear" is worth the whole cost of the Annual. It is a wonderful job. I remember the old "Scraps" quite well. I always think that Henderson's gave great value for money especially with Nuggets, Comic Life, and Lot-O-Fun.

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