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Hon. Librarian:

Roger Jenkins, 8 Russell Road, Havant, Hants.

WANTED: Boys' Friend 3d Library, No. 288

"The Boy Without a Name".

£7 offered for a copy in good condition.

Also £2 offered for a good copy of Gem 337.

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

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WHAT'S IN A COLUMN?

I have always been of the opinion that there was a quality about the Gem, Magnet and other papers, prior to 1915, which they lost during the First World War and never quite recaptured afterwards. This was partly due to the fact that, in those years, the school story was supreme in the Gem and Magnet. In addition there was just the serial instalment, ignored by the vast majority, and a few largish illustrations which were impressive. The advertisements were mainly restricted to the outer covers. This was all vastly different from the patchy and untidy layout with the shorter school story, the full supporting programme, and

advertisements tucked in all over the place in later years.

So we come to the question of columns. My own favourite was the two-columns to the page layout, which held sway until 1915. I found it neat, and easy on the eye. In the early years of the Boys' Friend Library and the Sexton Blake Library, there were no columns, and one read straight across the page.

Why, then, divide the page into columns at all? Easing eye strain must have been the main factor. A Magnet page of printing, without any columns, would have been uninviting. It is easier to read a story if the page is divided, which is the main reason why we always divide our stories into two columns in the C. D. Annual and in the C. D. itself.

Columns, too, cut down space wastage. That was why the Gem, Magnet and others changed from two to three columns during the first war. For some reason, the Magnet never went back to the two-column layout. The Gem did, for many years throughout the twenties and well into the thirties.

Particularly, with a writer like Charles Hamilton, who devoted whole lines countless to ejaculations like "Ow!", "Grooh!" "Ha, ha, ha", Bang!, Bump!, Boom! and so on, the space saved by the third column was considerable. It is a question whether neatness and pleasantness of layout was sacrificed to obtain that saving of space with the extra column.

YOU CAN'T HELP LARFIN':

"I can't get used to our Micky Mouse money," writes a Cheshire reader. Nor can I, old friend. Those wily old scamps at Westminster didn't change our money to aid us. They did it to mask the inflation which they are impotent to control. So they made matters a thousand times worse.

A million children play truant in Britain every single day. That's progress for you. When we went to school, if we had a half-day off, we had to produce a note of absence from Mum, or, alternatively, the school board man would be round in a flash. Not today. They've replaced the all-rounder schoolmasters like Henry Samuel Quelch with classes for this and classes for that, and the men and women of

tomorrow manage to disappear between this and that. And nobody seems to know and nobody seems to care.

Not so long ago, Britain was the greatest maritime nation in the world. Today, the liner "Queen Elizabeth" has to go to Holland for overhaul, because there's no dock over here capable of doing the work. They're all on strike, perhaps. Or is it less costly over there?

In the Radio Times, a gentleman is employed to tell readers about the films to be shown on B. B. C. T. V. "It's a portmanteau com-rom-dra," he says about one film. Concerning another, he refers to the "Bette Davis schtick." I don't know whether the language is American, Swahili, or just plain Hippy, but if you know what he means your education is better than mine.

A former cricketer, (appropriately named Wharton), and now a schoolmaster, interviewed on TV recently, stated that out of 600 boys at the school where he teaches, it would be impossible to select just one cricket eleven. What is happening in our schools? Shades of Lancaster and Da Costa.

I hear that Redcar, once in Yorkshire, and then in Teesside, has been moved to Cleveland. Well, well. And Gravesend is now Gravesham, and I laughed like anything when I heard they are having a competition for a "Miss Gravesham". I ought not to laugh. My own district is now Hart, which is nearly as funny. They have four men and four motor mowers to cut the grass verges which could be very attractive in the road in which I live. When the men and the mowers have passed the work is still not half done.

It's all depressing, but we can always turn for real enjoyment to the new volume of "Billy Bunter's Circus." You can't help larfin'!

THE ANNUAL IS ON THE WAY

This year's Annual is packed, as usual, with outstanding items to tickle your palate and help you to forget, for a while, the horrors of the seventies. Roger Jenkins, always so very worth reading, comes up trumps with a fascinating article entitled "Tales of Tyranny" in which he looks at the various barrings-out which took place in the leading Hamilton schools. W. O. G. Lofts contributes a fascinating, unusual, and controversial item in which the artist, the late John Jukes, has his say

about other artists who were colleagues of his. In autobiographical mood, Mary Cadogan looks back, and tells "How I Became a Collector". Brian Doyle reminisces pleasantly about Mr. Dennett who was one of the great schoolmasters of fiction.

Those are just a few of the plums in our coming, action-packed C. D. Annual. Have you ordered your copy yet? We cannot print many copies beyond the number ordered in advance. And if you are able to advertise in the Annual or send your greetings to your hobby friends, in that famous volume, you will be helping to make the wheels go round.

FAMOUS ARTISTS

This month we commence a new pictorial series, dedicated to the leading artists in the old papers. We think they are a delight, and you will enjoy them. They are the work of gifted Alf Hanson of Manchester.

THE EDITOR

DANNY'S DIARY

OCTOBER 1924

That old reliable, Rookwood, has been tip-top as usual in The Boys' Friend. The Fistical Four, in the last days of their summer holiday, get caught in the rain in Hampshire one night, and seek shelter in a chalet in the woods. But they cannot get admittance, and are chased away by a burly gamekeeper with a big dog. They hide in a tree, and hear the gamekeeper meet a youth whom he calls "Master Philip". When "Master Philip" lights a cigarette, they see his face in the light from the match. They learn at their inn that the chalet is in the grounds of Rutland Park, which is owned by a boy, Sir Harry Rutland, whose guardian is Mr. Packington, who has a son Philip.

Back at Rookwood for the new term, they learn that there is a new fifth-former who is Harry Rutland. But when they meet Rutland, they recognise him as "Master Philip". This story was entitled "The Mystery Fifty-Former".

Next week, "The Fifth-Former's Secret", Jimmy & Co. are able

to unmask the bogus Sir Harry Rutland. Mr. Packington has imprisoned the real Rutland in the chalet, and sent his son Philip to Rookwood in the boy baronet's name.

"A Friend in Need" was Lovell, who befriended Gower, who owed £7 to Joey Hook. But Lovell does more harm than good, as he knocks down Hook. However, in "A Lucky Find", Mornington finds Gower's I. O. U. for £7, which Hook dropped when Lovell biffed him, and Morny gives it to Gower.

There are very long instalments of "Chums of St. Kit's" in the B. F. - they spread over six pages. The editor says "Frank Richard's serial romps away as gaily as a two-year-old in a clover field." And that's about what it is.

This month there is a magnificent new story in the Sexton Blake Library. The whole family has read it and enjoyed it. It is entitled "The Forest of Fortune", and it introduces Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie. It finished in a camphor forest in Malaya, but there is some great detective work before Blake and Tinker solve a marvellous mystery.

I had another Sexton Blake tale in the Union Jack. This was "Reece on the Run", a Confederation yarn, packed with thrills.

A great lady writer, Frances Hodgson Burnett died on the 29th of the month. She was a Lancashire girl who married an American, and she wrote a large number of books and plays. Her most famous tales were "Little Lord Fauntleroy", written when she was young, and "The Secret Garden", written when she was old.

The series about St. Frank's in disgrace has continued throughout the month in the Nelson Lee Library. A senior boy died of natural causes, after a boozy evening with his friends. The first tale was "The Stigma of Shame" or "St. Frank's on the Brink". Only the Fourth Form, led by its captain, Pitt, stands by the old school and hopes to win back its good name.

Next week "Trying Times for St. Frank's" in which the old school has to put up with many insults, the worst coming from Bannington Grammar School. Then, in "The Schoolboy Boxer's Luck", Ernest Lawrence of the Fourth wins five thousand pounds in professional boxing, and the money is to go to help the school over its hard times. Finally, "The Schoolboy Stokers" in which Pitt & Co. salvaged a valuable cargo

steamer from destruction off Shingle Head. And the salvage money is all for the old school.

The first tale in the Magnet this month was the last of the splendid Sahara series. Entitled "The Vengeance of the Sheik", it has a thrilling part where Bob Cherry is tied on the back of a camel by the Sheik Mustapha ben Mohammed, and the camel is then driven off into the desert.

Everything after this series was bound to be an anti-climax, especially as, for the rest of the month, the Magnet gave us three of those weird tales as it so often does.

In "Billy Bunter's Wembley Party", Mr. Pascall, a wealthy Australian, thinks that Bunter has rendered him a service, and pays for the Owl to take a party to Wembley. Very so-so. Then "Sir Hilton's Nephew" was the new pal of Ponsonby - he would be - but he gets friendly with Harry Wharton & Co. towards the finish. Passable, this one. Finally "The Mystery Wreck". Penfold photographs a derelict vessel which has been on the sand dunes for many years, and he wins a prize for the picture. And then various people, including the scoundrel Marline Joe, and the nice fisherman Jack Babcock, become interested in the wreck. Could be because it has hidden in it a box containing giant pearls and gold and papers.

The minority government under Mr. Ramsay Macdonald has ended, and he dissolved parliament. Election day was the 29th. Labour was heavily defeated, but the biggest sufferers were Mr. Asquith and the Liberals who were almost wiped out.

A very poor month in the Gem, with plenty of cloud and not much sunshine. The opening tale was a sequel to "The Lightning Shaft" which ended last month's lot. "A Traitor in the School" was Cutts who was being blackmailed over Mr. Vining's electric gun. Didn't produce much of a bang. Next came "The Mayor's Cup". The Mayor of Wayland presented a thirty guineas cup to be presented to the winners in a football match between St. Jim's juniors and the Grammarians. The mayor's son stole it, and Gordon Gay thought Tom Merry & Co. had bagged it. Weary stuff. These two tales were pretty long, but the next one, though far better, was very short. This was "D'Arcy's Adopted", an amusing trifle in which Gussy was asked to mind a baby -

and the nursemaid didn't come back to claim it. Gussy took it back to school, and it turned out it was the infant of Mr. Frampton who was visiting Mr. Lathom. "I did not know it was your babay. It does not wesemble you at all. It is quite a good-lookin' babay."

Good fun, but only eight chapters.

Last - and least - a double-length tale "Dick Julian's Trial". New Zealand boy footballers are playing at Bagshot, and Kildare gets up a fund so that "numerous boys in the school unable to bear the expense" may have a trip to Bagshot. Julian refuses to contribute, so annoys everybody. He has lost all his money. He goes in for a scholarship and is accused at peeping at the exam paper beforehand, but Crooke confesses he was the cheat. Julian wins the scholarship, and his father gets his money back. I felt like going to the newsagent and asking for my money back, too.

At the pictures this month we have seen Norma Talmadge in "Song of Love"; Lon Chaney in "The Hunchback of Notre Dame"; Aileen Pringle and Conrad Nagel in "Three Weeks"; Hoot Gibson in "Hook and Ladder"; and Lois Wilson in "The Covered Wagon".

The new Prime Minister is Mr. Baldwin, and the new Chancellor of the Exchequer is Mr. Winston Churchill.

* * * * *

Conducted by

BLAKIANA

JOSIE PACKMAN

AN INTERVIEW WITH CECIL HAYTER

By S. Gordon Swan

After featuring Sexton Blake stories for nearly seven years the PENNY PICTORIAL ceased publication of this series in December 1913. The following month, January 1914, saw the advent of a new detective character, Derwent Duff, who wore a monocle to hide the fact that his left eye was a glass one. The author of this new series was Cecil Hayter.

It wasn't until issue No. 969, dated 22nd December, 1917, - nearly four years later - that the PENNY PICTORIAL published an interview with the author. The writer of the article, J. T. Bolton, described how he tracked down his quarry, alighting at the correct railway-station "somewhere on the South Coast," and went on to say:

" ... but many inquiries and much tortuous winding had to be gone through before I eventually arrived at the home of Cecil Hayter.

"As it happened, I had to set my teeth in the face of a south-westerly gale, which was sending the clouds racing across the sky and raising mountainous seas. A little ferry-boat carried me across a stretch of sea, where the tide was running so hard and fast that in the intervals of hanging on to my hat I had to give the ferryman a hand before he could bring the little boat to a safe landing.

"Then I tramped over a stretch of mud-ooze, with a deep, incriminating footmark at every step, to a bungalow, with its face set boldly looking out upon a wild English Channel. There I met Cecil Hayter and his wife."

Hayter, apparently a man in his forties, when asked why he lived so far off the map, placed a monocle in his right eye and said he chose the spot because it was quiet; also because he could get golf and sea-fishing all the year round. "Or, I should say, you could get the golf before they collared the links for an aerodrome." (At this time the Great War had been in progress for more than three years.)

Hayter showed the interviewer an etching of an old lady, of whom he was a fifth-generation descendant. It appeared that this lady was keen to solve the mystery surrounding the signs of the Ancient Order of Freemasons. She hid in a cupboard in a room where a meeting of Masons was to take place and was clever enough to elude the systematic search that was made before the proceedings started. Afterwards she told the assembly that she had gathered information about their mysteries, and there and then the meeting made the lady a Mason. She was the Honourable Mrs. Aldworth -- the only female member ever admitted to the Masons.

When asked how he wrote his stories, Hayter said he had no cut-and-dried system; that many of his tales were based on actual current crimes, with names and places disguised; and that he had sometimes pieced together motives and solutions of real crimes, which had been proved correct long after they appeared in the PENNY PICTORIAL.

After Hayter and his wife discussed a recent mystery and theorised on it, the interviewer concluded that Mrs. Hayter had a lot to do with the stories. She had been a journalist at one time, and Hayter

admitted that a story never went out of the bungalow until his wife had read it. Sometimes she toppled his theories like a house of cards and the story went into the wastepaper-basket.

Hayter went on to say that he had received inspiration from the pictures and various objects in his room and that he worked best in the three hours between 11 p. m. , and 2 a. m. He had also travelled extensively, having tramped Europe, lived in the U. S. A. , spent months shooting in Florida, and trekked four hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle. This last trip, through Lapland, was made in company with C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne, the celebrated author of "Captain Kettle," and took four months. The writers sailed north in the Windward, the ship which went to look for Nansen, who was at that time in quest of the Pole.

This article in the PENNY PICTORIAL is illustrated with photographs, one of them depicting a man in oilskins fishing (presumably Cecil Hayter himself) with water surging about him. The caption under the picture says: "The door of Cecil Hayter's bungalow is only a few yards from the waters of the English Channel, and he thinks out his plots while he tries to lure fish to his bait." Other pictures show the sitting-room with the pictures and articles that provided him with his plots, and there is one of him sitting at his writing-desk at work on a "Derwent Duff" yarn.

The regrettable feature of the article is that no mention was made of the fact that he had contributed many tales to the Sexton Blake Saga in The Boys' Friend, The Boys' Herald, The Union Jack and The Boys' Friend Library, and that he had been responsible for a great number of the Blake tales that preceded Derwent Duff in The Penny Pictorial. These last were all anonymous and, while some were by Herbert Maxwell, Michael Storm, W. Murray Graydon and others, I believe the majority of them were written by Cecil Hayter.

The article concluded as follows:

"As I write now I wonder whether the detective is sufficiently developed in 'P. P.' readers for them to hit on the spot where 'Derwent Duff' lives. I have left several clues."

RAIN, RAIN, - GO AWAY

by Raymond Cure

I am "at Home" with witches. Not that I am one myself, but

they do fascinate me, from the Witch of Endor in the time of Samuel, of Biblical fame, and her conjuring up of the dead, to the witches of Shakespeare with their boiling cauldron and their chant of Bubble, Bubble, toil and trouble, and the witches of Lancashire by Harrison Ainsworth. So it was of great interest to me when Old Mother Shipley appeared on the stage in the very first chapter of Anthony Skene's "The Rainmaker" in Union Jack, No. 1505, dated 20 August, 1932. To keep the pot boiling (or should it be the cauldron) we are treated to two illustrations of this lady. One on the cover page where the old hag is performing a rain-making dance worthy of any Indian or African witchdoctor. In fact, if you are of the nervous type I advise you not to look at it. The other illustration heads chapter one and she really does look the part. A chappie by the name of Glossop has kindly provided these illustrations.

Now it appears that what the old lady is performing for is that she wants to convince a party of hard-headed farmers that all the rain that was about and ruining their crops was due to her "war-dance" and that unless the afore-said hard-headed farmers coughed up £100 each this rain lark was likely to continue. The gentlemen not being able to deny that things looked serious decided to call in Sexton Blake. Probably they figured his over-all fee to scotch this hotch-potch would be cheaper in the long run - well you know what farmers are.

From the days when I first began to read I have read of rain-makers. Here and there with certain chemicals sprayed above cloud and there has been a small and very limited success. It appears that some of these fellows were behind our witch, putting her up to it for a small share in the ill-gotten gains which they visualised would come their way. We have, of course, rain-makers in our present day, both chemical and physical. Would you believe it but on the front page of the "Sunday People" last April, we are encouraged to believe that a certain Michael Mears speaks to clouds and makes them go away. "I first discovered I had the gift ten years ago" he said. And that is the reason we had a fine Easter instead of the one the Met. Office had promised us. Here we have rain-making in reverse.

In all modesty I consider myself a bit of a rain-maker. I mean, set my week's holiday for a certain date and it is bound to rain, or plan a day's picnic for tomorrow and "ditto" it nearly always works.

However, back to our witch, the farmers, Sexton Blake and the crook scientist rain-makers. When Sexton Blake takes up the case those rain-makers realise it never rains, but it pours. All their plans come unstuck; even our witch who had such promise turns out to be a bit of a phoney.

Once again the sun begins to shine, once again the sky is blue and the bees and the birds are about again, and the farmers are out to recoup the fee they paid Sexton Blake.

What a happy note to finish on, and if you happen to be an Anthony Skene fan here is a far happier note, for a month later, 24 September, 1932, he comes up with his "double" entitled "The Goldmaker", Union Jack, No. 1510. If you think the Goldmaker is a crook then you are right, and this is where Sexton Blake steps in again. Well, after all, its his job, eh?

* * * * *

Nelson Lee Column

"ONE OR TWO RATHER ODD THINGS"

by C. H. Churchill

Those interested in the Nelson Lee will, no doubt, remember that prior to the time when E. S. Brooks was revealed as being the author of the St. Frank's stories it was just stated "By the author of" and then followed the titles of the three previous stories. This system was in vogue for several years and did not vary.

I have recently been browsing through the pre St. Frank's Lees written by Mr. Brooks and I found some odd things, details of which I now give.

I have no copy of "Twenty Fathoms Deep" so do not know what was said here. In his second story "The Terror of Troone Towers" it just gives the one previous title.

In his third story in No. 23 (starting the Green Triangle series) is quoted his two previous stories and then "The Coffee Stall Mystery". Now this latter story was a Sexton Blake yarn published in Union Jack, No. 446, dated 27 April, 1912. As the N. Lee was dated 13 November, 1915, why did they jump back three years to get a title written by E. S. B. ?

In the next few Green Triangle numbers only stories from this

series were mentioned, plus "Twenty Fathoms Deep". From No. 37 onwards, however, to the end of this series, but excluding the last one (No. 53 "Zingrave's Last Card") four previous titles were given, three Green Triangle ones and then "The Red Spider". This last was another Sexton Blake tale, but published in the SBL 1st series, No. 6, in February 1916. As NL, No. 37, was dated February 1916, the dates coincide, but why plug this particular SB story week after week when no mention is made of SBL, No. 5 "Midst Balkan Perils" published only one month earlier than "The Red Spider". No doubt they wanted to attract readers to the SBL which had just started, but I just wonder why the first story was ignored while the second one was given such a lengthy mention.

We now come to the Jim the Penman series of which there were eighteen in all. It seems from the first one (No. 39 "The Lightning Clue") that it was hoped readers would think that it was written by a new author as no previous titles were given. If this was so, however, it was spoilt in the second tale (No. 42) because it gave here the previous title and then two Green Triangle ones. In the rest of the series except the last one, merely Jim the Penman titles were quoted. In this last one (No. 99) it said "By the author of the Circle of Terror".

As to the Eileen Dare series (fifteen in all) the author is given as having only written these plus Green Triangle stories. In the last one, however, No. 115, a new title is included - "The Cinema Clue". I am unable to find any story anywhere in the Nelson Lee guide of Bob Elythe's, written by E. S. B. under this title. So we are left with a mystery.

Coming to the first eleven Circle of Terror stories, here it merely says in the first one "By the author of the Green Triangle stories". The remainder just give Circle of Terror titles.

In the series of stories under the title of "Nipper's Note Book" which gradually became all St. Frank's ones, some very queer things developed. The first two said they were by the author of the Jim the Penman stories. The third one (No. 100) said the same on the cover, but inside said "By the author of the Green Triangle series". No. 105 (The Ivory Seekers) which incidentally introduced Dorrie and Umlosi, gave two previous Note Book stories plus "The House with the Double Moat". This last tale was issued in No. 33, Sexton Blake Library, the same month. No. 111 said on the cover "Leaves from Nelson Lee's

Diary No. 1 - "The Yellow Shadow". However, we never saw No. 2 or any more from his diary. It gave the author as having written Jim the Penman stories, Nipper's Note Book and again "The House with the Double Moat". No. 119, "The City of Burnished Bronze" really went to town, giving the author as being responsible for "The Ivory Seekers", "The Yellow Shadow", "Nipper at St. Frank's" and then "Twixt Sunset and Dawn" and "The Riddle of Yew Hollow". These last two were Union Jack stories (No. 720 and 726) published in July and September respectively.

From after knowledge we all know now that E. S. B. wrote the lot, but on looking back today I feel that some very queer things went on when titles were shown. If they intended readers to think that different authors wrote the various series, they slipped up badly, because the game was given away repeatedly.

Just to end with a question - Can anyone tell me where the story "The Cinema Clue" appeared?

IDLE THOUGHTS

by R. J. Godsave

The correspondence between E. S. Brooks and various Editors during his early life as an author, gives some idea of his outlook on life.

His early literary career was not exactly a bed of roses. The disappointments he suffered must, surely, have made him serious in thought and somewhat careful in money matters.

This attitude to life is reflected in the early Nelson Lees, although in the following more successful years his writing becomes more lighthearted.

The Singleton series shows that Brooks would not be guilty of waste in money matters. He states, with obvious satisfaction, that other wealthy St. Frank's juniors did not have complete control over their fortunes, and were unable to touch any but a small amount. Archie Glenthorne always had plenty of cash in his wallet, although he spent little of it.

* * *

A glimpse into the future as imagined by contributors often featured in various supplements.

In No. 20 of 'Nipper's Magazine' of 1922, Jack Grey gives his

impression on visitor's day in 1952 - thirty years hence. Mr. E. O. Handforth arrives in a luxurious limousine aeroplane which alights vertically in the old Triangle. With the great advance made in engineering during the 1914/18 war, one can be excused if it was thought that the general method of travel in 1952 would be by a personally owned aeroplane. Since jet propulsion was not invented in 1922, there was a limit to the carrying capacity of an aeroplane. The present airliners could not be visualised.

It is strange to think that nearly fifty years has passed since Jack Grey's article, and what was thought would be a mode of travel in 1952 would be impracticable in 1971.

* * *

Where does fiction end and reality begin? In the case of E. S. Brooks' writings in the Nelson Lee, it appears that Helmford is the last fictional town from the Sussex coast to London. Helmford is given as approximately twenty miles from St. Franks. This could well be the town of Horsham.

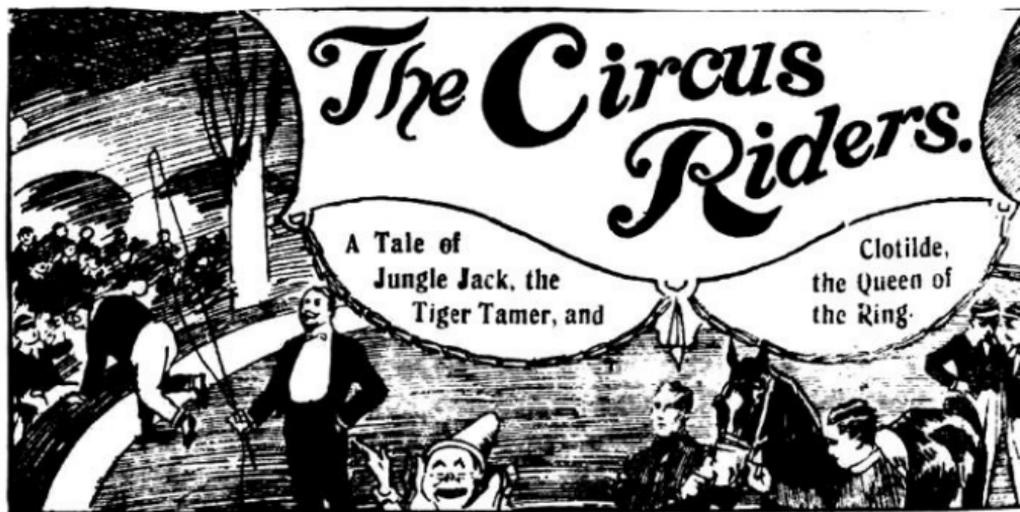
In the Ernest Lawrence series it states that the car into which Lawrence was enticed reached Helmford and left it behind. Then some-time later Lawrence realised the car was passing through Guildford and continued its journey until it was somewhere not very far distant from Esher. He guessed that he was getting near the outskirts of London.

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WANTED: Any of the following CD's 1 - 9, 11, 25, 41, 49 (your price paid): Collecting Magazines (Golden Hours, Old Boys' Book Collector, etc., except CD and SPC). Tom Merry, Billy Bunter Annuals (must have wrappers). High prices paid.
FOR SALE: CD's (before No. 60); T.M., B.B. Annuals and hardbacks.

M. SHREEVE, 25 WILLOW DR., RAYLEIGH, ESSEX.

* * * * *
(OUR NEW CLASSIC SERIAL. Nearly seventy years ago, under the pen-name of Harry Dorrian, Charles Hamilton wrote a series of circus stories. All his life he loved the circus. This circus was introduced into a small number of early Gem and Magnet stories. The old and original stories of Tomsonio's Circus are little known today, and hardly any of them are still in existence. Some readers may never have come across one - so we give you the opportunity now. As a story, it is not

outstanding. But we think you will enjoy the novelty of going back to early in the century and meeting the author when he was young and before he was famous.)



By HARRY DORRIAN.

(Title heading by WARWICK REYNOLDS)

"Whoa-a!"

The little, fat fellow, who was driving a gaily-painted caravan along the road leading to the village of Friardale, drew in the reins, and the horse stopped.

The driver, about whose ears were traces of colour, as if his face had been painted, and all the paint had not been quite washed away, cocked his silk hat on one side, and then gazed at the big iron gates at which he had pulled up.

"Hallo, you gipsy, what do you want?"

The driver rolled his big eyes as a fat

youth wearing a huge pair of spectacles, opened the gates and came up to the caravan.

The man smiled at the boy in the Eton suit.

"Well, what do you want?"

"My lad, you are apparently sane and intelligent - apparently, I say - yet you cannot tell me from a gipsy - a common or garden gipsy?"

The fat youth stared through his huge spectacles.

"Well," he said, "if you aren't a gipsy, who are you? You are not coming to the

school are you?"

"Have you not seen me before?"

"N-no!"

"Why, not on the coloured bills?"

The fat youth looked puzzled, and shook his head in the negative.

The driver of the caravan assumed an injured expression, and rolled his big eyes.

"Ah, well," he said, "I must introduce myself! Youth, thou who hast seen but little of the world, Joseph Montgomery Pye is before you!" And the fat gentleman raised his silk hat.

"Joseph - Montgomery - Pye!"

"Yes; that is my cognomen. I am the King of Funny Merchants. I am the renowned wheeze-wangler, the Pride of the Tan - in short, the clown of Signor Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus!"

Another boy came through the gates, and smacked Mr. Pye's astounded listener a resounding thwack on the back.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, my fat Bunter!" he said. "And who is your friend in the State Coach?"

"Ow!" yelled the fat junior. "Really, Cherry, there was no need to thump me like that."

"Well, who is this differ in the topper?"

Bunter adjusted his spectacles, and grinned.

"He says his name is Pye, and this is his circus."

"You seem to have misunderstood me, my son. I am Joseph Montgomery Pye, the wheeze-wanger of Signor Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus. This is not the circus, it is the advance-guard. The signor, with all the wild beasts of the forest, and the Strong Man's dumb-bells, is coming up in the rear."

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"I suppose it's a cock-shy kind of affair. Big tent, and the audience have to sit on the grass to see an old woman made up as a girl, go round and round the ring on an old cab-horse."

Joey Pye sighed.

"And you, my lad, seem not to have heard of Clotilde, the Queen of the Ring. The wonderful child equestrienne. The beautiful girl-rider, who, with Mr. Joseph Montgomery Pye, and Jungle Jack, the boy Tiger Tamer, has performed before all the crowned heads of Europe - more or less."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry, the junior who had joined Billy Bunter, roared with laughter, as the jovial little man rattled off his rigmarole of sentences.

"My son, your hilarity is misplaced. Tell me, what is this building you appear to inhabit?"

"Greyfriars School," said Bob Cherry.

"Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"Is this far from Friardale Common?"

"About a quarter of a mile, perhaps a bit more," replied Bob Cherry. "Why?"

"Ahem, it looks like business here!"

"Is this show going -"

"My son, mayhap you will adopt a more respectful manner when referring to Signor Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus and Hippodrome," interrupted Mr. Pye.

"Is the circus going to be on Friardale Common?" asked Billy Bunter.

"It is," replied Joey Pye. "And here comes Jack Talbot and Miss Clotilde."

"Will it be worth going to see?" said the fat boy.

"When you see Miss Clotilde, sonny,

you will want to go in the early doors," replied Joey, who was devoted to the girl-rider of the circus.

Thud, thud, thud!

A boy, and a girl were coming along the road on horse-back, and were rapidly approaching the gates of Greyfriars School.

"My only hat, what a ripping girl," muttered Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter cleared his spectacles and readjusted them, and blinked with interest as the two riders cantered up to the caravan.

The girl was quite young, and sat her big black Arab with perfect ease and grace.

The two schoolboys raised their caps, and the girl smiled - a pleasant smile.

Jack Talbot, known to the circus-going public as Jungle Jack, reined his horse to the side of the caravan.

"Hallo, Joey," he said, with a laugh, "how much further before we get to Friardale?"

"Not half a mile, sonny."

"Well, we'll get along. The signor is not far behind."

"We're going to have good business here, Jackie," said Joseph Montgomery Pye.

"I hope so."

"We shall have to turn them away at the door; it will be crowded every night."

Clotilde, Jungle Jack's mounted companion, laughed.

"You are very sanguine, Mr. Pye."

"What the wheeze-monger of Signor Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus and Hippodrome doesn't know, isn't worth knowing," replied Joey.

"Yes, but how can you tell as early as this in the morning that we're -"

"Why, bless you, I suggested to the signor myself that we should pitch near Greyfriars School!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's up?" said Jack Talbot.

"Ho, ho, ho!"

Bob Cherry and Billy Bunter leant against the wheels of the caravan and roared with laughter.

"What did you say, my lad?" said Joey Pye, as the two juniors paused for breath.

"I didn't speak," replied Bob Cherry.

"But I like that yarn of yours that you knew the circus was coming to Greyfriars."

Clotilde smiled, as Joey Pye blushed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the schoolboys. And the short-sighted Bunter leant against Jack Talbot's horse in mistake for the caravan.

"Look out!" said Jack Talbot, giving the laughing junior a jab in the back with his toe.

"Ow!"

Billy Bunter jumped into the air, as though he had been shot.

"Ow! Oh, I've been kicked!"

"Where, you frabjous ass?" asked Bob Cherry, catching hold of Bunter's arm.

"Oh - oh, dear, in the back!"

"Here?"

"Ow! Don't touch it! My back's broken! I'm sure it is!"

Jungle Jack and Joseph Montgomery Pye simultaneously jumped to the ground, and steadied Billy Bunter.

"What is it?" said Jack Talbot.

"Oh, dear; I'm afraid I'm dying," moaned Bunter. "It landed me right in the back."

"What did?"

"The horse's hind-hoof!"

"I'm awfully sorry!" said Jack Talbot; "but really, it was your own fault!"

"Oh-h, I've come over quite faint!"

Joey Pye caught hold of the fat junior, and, letting down the steps at the rear of the caravan, sat Bunter down.

"That's all right, sonny," explained the clown. "You'll feel all right in a minute."

"Oh-h, I believe if I had a mouthful of something to eat it would set me right!"

"Something to eat?"

"Yes. You know, Cherry and I got up early this morning to go for a run, and I haven't had anything to eat since last night. And then I only had three helpings of beef, and four helpings of rice pudding, and - "

"Four helpings?" gasped Joey Pye, interrupting the greedy schoolboy's flow of language.

"Yes; and then I had some cake in Wharton's study; and - "

"Some cake?"

"Yes; and Bulstrode gave me some pastries that had got stale, and - "

"Some pastries?"

"Yes; and I was going to say that Frank Nugent gave me some toffee that had got burnt; but it tasted all right, and - "

"You ate it?"

"Yes; but I think if I had a mouthful, it would set my back right. "

(THIS CLASSIC SERIAL WILL BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)

* * * * *

THE LIBRARY AT ROSE LAWN

By Roger M. Jenkins

Our visits to Kingsgate always seem to be blessed with fine weather, and this Saturday was no exception. It was a typical English summer's day with fluffy clouds moving slowly across a blue sky. Waves of shadow drifted across the ground, and from the study window at Rose Lawn the garden looked most attractive. It was easy to understand why Charles Hamilton had chosen a back room at the top of the house for his writing, especially when it is realised that until twenty years ago, the garden at the rear backed on to cornfields.

I have often glanced at the rows of books in this upstairs room where so much of his best work was created, and this time (thanks to Miss Hood) I was able to fulfil a long-felt ambition to examine some of these books at my leisure. It was not the Latin and German authors that I wished to read, and the English poets and prose writers I also passed by. The titles of school stories by other authors I did indeed scrutinise, but the books I wanted to open were the travel books.

One of the wonders of the Magnet is the authenticity of the backgrounds of his foreign travel series. The really great series were all set in countries that Charles Hamilton had never visited, and I had always felt convinced that he had carefully studied the backgrounds. He used to

read with a pencil in his hand, and he made liberal use of it, underlining, encircling, and using other markings where items really interested him. It was comparatively easy to follow the trail that he had blazed.

I began with "Islands Under the Sun" by Cheeseman (1927). Here I found some descriptions of Tahiti underlined, and "From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands" by Gunshaw had numerous marks against descriptions of clothing, scenery, and customs of Fiji. The real find, however, was "Pacific Tales" by Berke (1925 edition) which substantiated my theory that the Ken King stories were years out of date. This book was originally published in 1897 and its references to beachcombers and blackbirders were admittedly ancient history when it was first published, but it nevertheless was made extensive use of by Charles Hamilton.

Keeping my eyes still fixed on the Orient, I examined "China" by Douglas (1920). This book had a few underlinings, but "China - The Land and People" by Buxton (1929) had masses of markings: village scenes, the absence of horses, the use of donkeys and wheelbarrows, the abundance of pigs, but the absence of sties - all these were heavily scored, to make their appearance in the famous China series of 1930.

My search for background material for the various African series was rather disappointing. I found a novel called "Kenya Dawn" by Strange (1928) which had underlinings of plants, animals, and native phrases, but certainly this alone could not have been sufficient and presumably other books were used which were no longer on the shelves.

Undoubtedly my greatest success was the material for the Brazil series of 1936. A story called "Red Macaw" by Haggard (1934) obviously suggested the episode of Bunter and his pet Macaw, and there were many markings and leaves turned down where Portuguese phrases were mentioned and lianas described. "Brazilian Adventure" by Fleming (1935 edition) had a fine description of Rio de Janeiro, and the famous "River Amazon From its Sources to the Sea" by Franklin (1914) was heavily marked with references to pumas, anacondas, and vivid descriptions of peccaries. Also used was the description of how macaws get their beaks trapped in nuts. But the most unexpected discovery of all was an illustrated leaflet which fell out of one book. It was a Blue Star Line brochure for South American tours, and there were markings against the times taken by the various steamers and their ports of call -

Lisbon, Madeira, and Teneriffe, all duly visited by the Greyfriars juniors in Magnet 1462. If I had not discovered all I had hoped, I had at least found sufficient to satisfy myself that the famous foreign travel series owed something to careful research as well as to the imaginative mind of one of the great story tellers.

* * * * *

REVIEW

"BILLY BUNTER'S CIRCUS"

Frank Richards

(Howard Baker Press: £3.20)

Once upon a time there was a little, fat, hairless man, who wore a wig, false moustaches, and flamboyant clothes. He owned a circus. He went swimming in a river. A fat boy came along, donned the wig, the false moustaches, and flamboyant clothes, and was accepted as the owner of the circus, to which, for certain reasons, the real proprietor was too nervous to return. And readers lived happily ever after.

Frank Richards loved circuses all his life. He wrote a great many circus stories, but this was the most memorable of them all.

This is the Whiffles Circus series of eight Magnets of the year 1928. Quite absurd and quite entrancing, it is one of the best-loved of all the Magnet holidays. You just suspend belief, and have the time of your life. My own favourite titbit in this glorious concoction is where the bogus Mr. Whiffles and the genuine Mr. Quelch meet for an interview. It's the laugh of a lifetime.

Frank Richards at his best in a glorious romp which is so superbly written that you forget it is polished nonsense. To be savoured over and over again, with no risk of indigestion. Leonard Shields illustrates it all with a sure touch.

* * * * *

WANTED: Good loose copies or volumes containing same of BOYS' FRIEND - issues between Nos. 1182 and 1256. Good copies essential.

ERIC FAYNE

EXCELSIOR HOUSE, CROOKHAM RD., CROOKHAM, HAMPSHIRE.

* * * * *

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Norman Shaw

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The Postman Called

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

A. V. PACKER (Southgate): Just a note to say how I revelled in "The Letters of Frank Richards." It really is a publication meriting the highest praise. How fortunate you were to have met him and corresponded with him.

Fr. F. HERTZBERG (Wirral): Regarding Mr. Lofts interesting piece on THE PLANET, this was advertised quite a lot in the Sun before it came out so one would have expected that it would be well known. Mr. Lofts repeats Denis Gifford's assertion that The Sun derived from Fitness and Sun, and health magazine: but the editor of the Comet said several times that the Sun derived from a pre-war children's comic of that name, and if this was simply a cover up of the real antecedents, why did he risk blowing it by offering to buy any pre-war copies that people would send him? I bow at all times to the knowledge of Mr. Lofts, but would like to know who is correct?

J. ROBYNS (Hayle): "The Letters of Frank Richards" came yesterday. How very grateful I am to receive it. Its contents gave me again the impression that Frank Richards is with us still. The collection makes a treasure and I feel I must thank you for all your care and patience in making it possible.

C. RICHARDSON (Loxwood): I agree with Jack Cook. We seem in C. D. to be getting away from O. B. B. collecting. I love nostalgia, I love the old films on TV (the best part of TV programmes) but I subscribe to C. D. for its obvious contents from the title - Story Paper Collectors' Digest. The F. R. Letters are terrific!

DON REED (New Zealand): What about a page or two in Collectors' Digest of queries from readers, a series of short questions and answers? From my point of view it would be most welcome, and I'm sure others would appreciate something along these lines. Any ticklish questions would no doubt be handed over to the various experts, though I'm quite sure you wouldn't strike this too often!

VICTOR GILES (Barking): How very much I agree with your comments

on TV's recent showing of "Good-Bye, Mr. Chips." It prompts me to ask whether any of your readers were fortunate enough to see the BBC2 presentation around last Christmas time of "The Happiest Years," - a 1950 vintage MGM movie, starring Dean Stockwell.

Switching on more or less by chance I was beguiled by this unexpected story of a Boston private school at the turn of the century. In a plot that could have come straight from the pages of the "Magnet" or "Gem" a young scallywag - the despair of his parents - arrives as a new boy determined to be "Cock o' the Walk", and naturally incurs the wrath of all and sundry.

I was particularly interested to read on the credit titles that the picture was based on the stories of the boys of Laurenceville School by Owen Johnson. This American author is new to me. Can anyone supply a few details of his work?

N. M. KADISH (Edgware): Being in hospital this year, I could not go on holiday, so I decided to join up with the Famous Five on their trip up Father Thames as related in the Magnet Nos. 1643-1650. It was quite an enjoyable trip for me at any rate and I took full part in all their minor adventures and skirmishes with such established villains as Ponsonby and Loder as well as the newcomer Shifty Spooner. I also decided to follow the route the boys took and used the Oxford Travel Atlas of Britain as a reference. The following I found were not shown in the book:-

Whitechurch (at least not near the Thames)

Tilehurst, Purley, Mapledurham, Newbridge, Radcot and Rushy.

Frank Richards must have been extremely familiar with the Thames along its length up from Kingston to be aware of such places, which are not even mentioned in the travel book. In addition he is certainly acquainted with river-boating as several boating-terms are used in a very confident manner throughout these adventures. At any rate I was almost as refreshed and rested as Harry Wharton & Co., were by the time they had finished their trip near Lechlade and were due to return to school. I am glad I joined them!

P. TIERNEY (Grimsby): Our two cats send their best wishes to

Mr. Softee. They have seen his photograph in the C. D. Annual, and they think he looks a very handsome fellow, but rather conceited.

* * * * *

BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

No. 7. STOP THAT MAN FROM LEYTONSTONE

In the late twenties the renters were considerably worried at the constant theft of their films. There was continual reference to this matter in the Kine Weekly, and also in the national press.

After a film's booking ended, at the end of a week or 3-day booking period, it would be brought down from the operating box to the vestibule, and there left awaiting collection by the road transport firm. As these collections usually took place in the middle of the night, the films would often be stood right outside the doors cinemas after they closed. In the same way, films, in their fireproof cases, could be seen standing about at London termini awaiting entrainment or collection by the renters. It was easy for anyone so minded to steal films from outside the cinemas or from railway stations.

I have already mentioned a man at Leytonstone - I will call him Mr. Jones, though that was not his name - who supplied our early Ford projector, and from whom we occasionally booked films. It was naturally assumed that the films he had for rental were very old ones which had been disposed of by various renters. We did not run many features from Leytonstone, as we were booking from all the London renters. Usually it was an occasional Sunday programme which came from Leytonstone, owing to the fact that one

could make a booking as late as the day before, whereas from Wardour Street one had to book a few weeks in advance, and contracts had to be exchanged. Usually Mr. Jones sent out his films to us by Carter Paterson, and they never took more than 24 hours in transit. Sometimes, when I made a late decision to run a show on the Sunday, I would take a couple of hefty lads over to Leytonstone with me from Surbiton, and we would carry them back ourselves.

Mr. Jones was youngish, probably about 35 then. He was a pleasant man, and we were friendly.

One Wednesday evening - my normal evening off in the week - I went to Kennington Theatre, where the main picture was a Universal feature entitled "Stop That Man" starring Arthur Lake and Barbara Kent. It was an excellent film of the thriller type, and I made up my mind that I would book it for our own cinema.

When I got home, my evening mail was awaiting my attention, and in it was a letter from Mr. Jones in which he listed one or two fresh films which he had just obtained. I was intrigued to find that one of these films was entitled "Hold That Man." It struck me as a coincidence that I had just seen "Stop That Man" in its first week of release in South London (it had been released the previous week in North London), and now Mr. Jones had one named

"Hold That Man" available for booking from him. I wondered whether it was possible that they could be one and the same film.

The next morning I rang up Mr. Jones and booked "Hold That Man" for the following Sunday. Just in case, I rang up National Screen Services, and told them to send me along the trailer on "Stop That Man."

As soon as the feature "Hold That Man" arrived, I yanked out a reel. It only took a few minutes' examination to show me that it was, indeed, the Universal new release "Stop That Man".

They had taken off the real title and all the credits, and, of course, the censor's certificate. They had made a new leader, with the title "Hold Than Man", and attached it to the start of the film. I, however, played it under its proper title by detaching the false name leader, cutting out the title strip from the "Stop That Man" trailer and attaching that to the front of the film. So we played "Stop That Man" in its very first week of release, and many weeks before it was played in the local cinema.

Obviously it was a stolen print, pinched almost certainly from some cinema in North London the previous week. There is

no suggestion, of course, that Mr. Jones stole it, but he surely knew that it was stolen when he bought it from someone.

In the next eighteen months or so he often came up with suspiciously new films. One of these was "Our Dancing Daughters" starring Joan Crawford, an M.G.M. film, though this one was under its own title. By that time we were running plenty of M.G.M. releases, but this one came, via Mr. Jones, for us to play in its first or second week of release.

There arrived a day when Mr. Jones telephoned me. He told me that he was going away for three months, and he suggested that he should send me all his feature films and that I should keep them until he returned, playing them when I happened to have open dates for them.

I declined very hastily, pointing out that I had no storage space for a large number of films. We ran no further bookings from Leytonstone, and I never had contact with Mr. Jones again.

THERE WILL BE ANOTHER ARTICLE IN

THIS SERIES

SHORTLY

* * * * *
WANTED: The Jolly Comic (pre-war).

WESTWOOD

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* * * * *
EXCHANGE: Adventure: 4 (1939) & 4 (1940); 1 Beano (1940); Hotspur, 4 (1937), 5 (1940); Jack, Sam & Pete, No. 2, 3d. Lib., 75 Rovers (not a complete run), 1950-1951.

WANTED: Dixon Hawke Libs.

McMAHON, 54 HOZIER CRES., TANNOCHESSIDE.

News of the Clubs

CAMBRIDGE

Sunday, 8th September

A small attendance, due mainly to the previous day's great gale. Danny Posner reported in connection with the Cambridge Leisure Fair that he had taken along a load of books and papers, but owing to the torrential downpour he had not been able to display the items, owing to the risk of damage.

The Secretary drew attention to articles in Sunday Times and Church Times respectively, relating to an American Sherlock Holmes student's theory that the original of Professor Moriarty was the German philosopher Neitzscher; and to G. A. Henty and other Victorian writers of boys' adventure stories.

Next meeting 13th October. Subject: Hamiltonia.

+ + +

LONDON

A rare sight at the Leytonstone meeting, Michael Perry having a nice bunch of Magnets and Gems for sale. Needless to state, they were soon snapped up.

Mary Cadogan exhibited a copy of Arthur Marshall's book "Girls Will Be Girls" and gave a short talk which proved to be very interesting. David Aaronberg read a funny chapter of incidents from a Jennings book, nice to see David once again.

A quiz of eight questions conducted by Josie Packman, a time filler ere the company adjourned to a scrumptious feed. The quiz was won by Eric Lawrence. The latter had compiled a fine cryptic grid competition and the winner was David Aaronberg. Winifred Morss filled the second place.

Bob Blythe's Mystery Voices was enjoyed by all and it was Mary Cadogan first and Ann Bradford second. Nelson Lee Library, 531, 8th Ausut, 1925, on view with Leslie Marcantonio's name in it as the first application to join the St. Frank's League; his award was a sport's knife.

The coach for Maidstone on Sunday, 20th October, leaves Woolworth's, Vauxhall Bridge Road, at 11.00 sharp.

Finally, the hosts, Reuben and Phyllis Godsave were suitably thanked for wonderful hospitality.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

+ + +

NORTHERN

Saturday, 14 September, 1974

Chairman Geoffrey Wilde welcomed us to our unusual premises, and the epithet 'unusual' seemed appropriate in more ways than one.

We were in a student's small and dimly-lighted 'bed-sit' and as there were not enough chairs we besported ourselves on tables and portmanteaux.

Chairman Geoffrey had not been present at our last meeting and said he felt called upon to reflect on the historic circumstances in which he had chaired his last meeting in the old place without realising that he had done so.

But it made one see, said Geoffrey, that human links were for ever abiding, and passed on from one generation to another.

The first item of the programme was a riddle-me-ree presented by Harry Blowers, and the first to provide the answer, Handforth, was Ron Rhodes.

Then another item by Harry Blowers, in which each clue was a sentence which contained the name of a Hobby character. Tying in first place with 22 correct results each were Ron Hodgson, Ron Rhodes and Jack Allison.

From Ron Rhodes, a rather stiffer quiz, though, according to Ron, it was going to be a very easy one. Certainly most of us got the first one right - 'He must be watched at Highcliffe', and the connexion between Lord Peter Wimsey and Greyfriars seemed obvious. But the middle names of Arthur Carne and Arthur Courtenay and the first name of Trotter Tomlinson, seemed elusive.

Perhaps CD readers would like to have a go at this: 'Three pairs of eyes in two, one hazel, one brown. Who owns the other?' And that,

really, is a nice and easy one!

Our next meeting will be held on the usual day at 6.30, in the small lecture room of the Swarthmore Educational Centre in Woodhouse Square, Leeds. From the University go down Clarendon Road and it is facing you. Cars may be parked by the Infirmary or St. George's Chapel.

SHERLOCK HOLMES: Wanted - Herlock Sholmes and anything relating to Sherlock Holmes, Basil Rathbone, Jack the Ripper. Sale - Sherlock Holmes books, models, etc. Free monthly lists.

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BOOK REVIEW

GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS by Arthur Marshall (Hamish Hamilton, £2.95)

It would be misleading to assume that this book is a companion volume to BOYS WILL BE BOYS, E. S. Turner's comprehensive survey of boys' fiction papers. GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS is a miscellany of Arthur Marshall's book reviews and articles which have previously appeared in various periodicals. The one consistent theme is (usually affectionate) debunking, and it is euphemistic to call many of his subjects 'girls'.

Mr. Marshall (who was not only a Housemaster at Oundle, but the dauntless Nurse Dugdale of wartime radio fame) romps at random through lacrosse playing schoolgirls a la Brazil, and the love-lacerated heroines of Elinor Glynn, Florence Barclay and Ethel M. Dell. He also happily takes in his stride real-life females as formidable as Mata Hari, Marilyn Monroe and Isadora Duncan. Frequently Mr. Marshall departs from girls altogether, and cannot resist having a vigorous go at Dean Farrar (ERIC, OR LITTLE BY LITTLE), Ernest Raymond (TELL ENGLAND), as well as Godfrey Winn and Beverley Nichols.

With disarming exuberance he stamps on the sacred corns of

many collectors, but he is so entertaining that I can forgive him almost everything - though not his assessment of Charles Hamilton. Reviewing BUNTER'S LAST FLING in 1965, Mr. Marshall rejoices that this is the last episode in the Greyfriars' saga, and writes:

'The meaningless repetitions, the implausibility, the tastelessness, the Ho! Ho! Ho! and Ha! Ha! Ha! are over. To borrow a phrase, He! He! He!'

The MAGNET is indicted for giving its readers 'a markedly unreal picture of public schools', apparently 'a hearty disservice both to fact and fiction'. Bunter is dismissed as 'obese and, one suspects, impotent', unbelievable as a schoolboy and having 'more in common with a gin-swilling, petty-cash-fiddling, perspiring middle-aged businessman, endlessly swapping dirty stories with the lads and chatting up Miss Loosely in the snug.' However, in spite of his contempt for the Fat Owl, the author of GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS shares one of Bunter's characteristics - a long-standing loathing of organized sport.

'When blessed rain made the cricket pitches too sodden for activity the obvious alternative, inactivity, was not permitted. We were herded together in the gymnasium. Sometimes there was boxing, that hideous and useless invention ...'

Equally Arthur Marshall hated Figure Marching, Physical Jerks and football, whose cancellation demanded something more drastic than rain: '... nothing but the death of the head-master could stop football ...'

But let us return to feminine realms. In the jargon of our adored Angela Brazil, GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS is a tophole stunt, as jinky as you like, at which 'Nurse Dugdale' must have toiled away, womanfully. Gratters, Old Thing!

MARY CADOGAN

* * * * *

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