

\* STORY PAPER \*

# COLLECTORS

VOL 28

No 336

# DIGEST

17P

DECEMBER

1974



H WEBB

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## COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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W. H. GANDER

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CHRISTMASWITHYOUREDITORMAGIC

A good many of us, as children, loved fairy tales. I certainly did. I suppose my first introduction to them, as a toddler, was "Tales for Little People", published by Aldine's. Two titles have lingered lovingly in my memory as the years have swept by: "The Magic

## THE VERY BEST ONE FOR JOLLY XMAS FUN



Jacket" and "At the Back of Beyond". I used to hope that one day I might see them again, but they have never turned up. Oddly enough, I have no recollection at all of "Young Folks Tales", put out by Henderson's on the strength of the great success of Aldine's "T. F. L. P."

I liked Grimm and Hans Anderson. A favourite was "The Tinder Box", about the dogs with eyes the size of saucers and of cartwheels, though I thought the soldier was ungrateful when he cut off the head of the witch who had put him on the way to fortune.

Parents today, who countenance so much which they should not countenance, would, I am sure, be horrified at the idea of their small offspring reading "The Tinder Box" and the like. Yet fairy tales, for all their little horrific items, never scared me. I yelled out for Mum after reading the Magnet's "The Hidden Horror", in bed, and I had nervous spasms following the Sexton Blake adventure "The Mystery of the Living Shadow." But I never turned a hair at "Big Claus and Little Claus" or "Rumpelstiltskin."

There was magic in the theatres, too. I loved the magic shows. Of course, they still have stage magicians on TV, but television cheapens everything. I remember being taken as a child to Maskelyne and Devant's one Christmas time. The venue was named the Maskelyne Theatre then, somewhere in the West End of London, but I fancy that in earlier days it had been called St. George's Hall. Anyone recall it? I suppose it has long gone the way of anything worth remembering.

Then, later on, there were the touring magic shows. Two excellent shows I recall, between the wars, were those of Dante and of Horace Goldin. The mother of one of my pupils was the feet part of Goldin's famous illusion "Sawing Through a Woman."

#### THE MAGIC OF THE OLD COMICS

One of my most cherished possessions among the old papers is a 1916 Christmas Double Number of the Favorite Comic. The Favorite was one of the Royal Family of Comic Papers put out by the Amalgamated Press up till the time when the paper shortage of the later war years dealt them all a blow from which none really recovered. The Favorite is not one of the best known, but it was typical of the comics of its day, and quite first-rate.

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The other day I was reading what Danny had to say about one of his early Christmases. He wrote about the Jester - what a lovely old paper it was! - as follows: "All the stories in the Jester seem to be about convicts with hearts of gold, wicked landlords, cruel mill-owners, and amazing people who do heroic deeds."

It was true, too, of all the popular comic papers. The comics of the time set out to capture the ha'pence of the so-called working classes, and, in actual fact, they captured the ha'pence of a great many others too. Convicts certainly had a big part to play. Plenty of parents, and most schoolmasters, would have frowned at the activities of Tom, the Ticket-of-Leave Man, and of Portland Bill. As they became more loved they became more respectable, and changed from convicts into Tom, the Menagerie Man, and Butterfly Bill.

I loved them all, and I reckon that most of you did, too, especially at Christmas time when they slid out on the ice and snow.

I loved Constable Cuddlecook, Dreamy Daniel, K. N. Pepper, and the rest. Even more than the real life people, I think, like G. S. Melvin, Little Tich, Charlie Chaplin, and the rest who replaced the fictitious characters. I wonder who was the first real-life character in the comics. I've no doubt that we have given the information in C. D. or the Annual in some of the fine articles we have presented from our experts, and perhaps one of them will just jog our memories.

### A MERRY CHRISTMAS

All being well, by mid-December, the C. D. Annual for 1974, will be dropping through your letter-boxes. Most of our favourite and well-loved contributors feature in this new giant volume, and Mr. Henry Webb is responsible for the charming cover. In the past two months I quoted at random from the contents bill, but there are plenty of other items, varied and nostalgic, to give you pleasure this coming Christmas. I think you will say it is our best Annual yet. At any rate, we have tried to make it so. Supplies will be limited. Have you ordered your copy yet?

While I think of it, our next issue of C. D. will, owing to the holidays, almost certainly be a day or two later than normal in reaching you. Please be patient, and give us plenty of rope.

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In conclusion, the old, old wish. To you all, my lovely, loyal friends, a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas, and may the New Year bring you everything that is good.

THE EDITOR

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# DANNY'S DIARY

DECEMBER 1924

There has been a truly excellent 3-story series of Rookwood in the Boys' Friend. In "A Football Feud", Jimmy Silver revives a discarded football fixture with Oakshott School, and then wishes he hadn't, for Valance Chilcot, Poole-Poole, and the Oakshott lot are bad sportsmen and very snobby. Rookwood walks over them, of course, and in the second story "An Awkward Situation" Jimmy thrashes Chilcot, and Chilcot, not liking to admit that he had been beaten up by one of his own size, claims that he was attacked by a tramp - and the tramp is arrested. In the final tale of the series, "A Victim of His Own Treachery", Chilcot arranged for Jimmy to be beaten by a thug, and Chilcot got the walloping himself - and Jimmy went to his rescue. A rattling good series.

Final of the month was the Boys' Friend Christmas Number, in which the Rookwood tale was "A Christmas Chase". Lovell threw a snowball in the air and it fell to earth - on the Head. Lovell was sentenced to spend his Christmas vac at the school, but ran away - and Dr. Chisholm went after him. Lovell rescued Dr. Chisholm after the Head fell through the ice, and all was well. Nice little Christmas tale.

The Boys' Friend is giving away "booklets" each week. There have been ones on wireless and on stamps, and, with the Christmas Number, they gave "A Book of Christmas Fun." Very nice, too.

There is a new St. Kit's serial, "The Captain of the Fourth", about Harry Wilmot & Co. now starting in the Boys' Friend.

After the wettest summer ever, we are not having a nice winter. On the 10th and 11th of December, there was the worst fog ever known over the whole country. This was followed by very heavy gales and incessant rain. A plane, flying from Croydon Aerodrome to Paris,

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crashed near Purley, and seven passengers and the pilot were killed.

The opening story in the Magnet this month is "The Schoolboy Financier." Fisher T. Fish sets himself up as a pawnbroker and a money-lender in the Remove passage. So much for that.

But then there started a splendid new series starring Harry Wharton. The opening tale is "Trouble in the Co." Colonel Wharton wires to Harry to meet him at Ashford, but Wharton, with an important football match about to start, does not go. But when he learns that the Colonel was on his way to Russia to help a trapped comrade, and going into great danger, Harry is stricken with remorse. There are a lot of misunderstandings, and Harry falls out with his friends.

Then, in the Magnet's Christmas Number, we had "Harry Wharton's Christmas." Wharton, at loggerheads with his friends, goes to Monte Carlo with the Bounder, and all goes fairly well till they are joined by Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe. A sombre Christmas tale, but wonderful.

Last of the month, "Friends or Foes?". Wharton, rather late in the day, realises he has been hasty in casting off his old friends. He wires to Frank Nugent's home in Wiltshire, but Bunter destroys the wire without Frank seeing it, and more misunderstandings occur. And Harry Wharton goes to spend some time with Jimmy Silver whose home, the Priory, is near the home of the Nugents. And Harry met Nugent in the road, and fought him. Rather a tragic Christmas for the Famous Five.

The City and South London Railway between Moorgate and Clapham Common has re-opened this month after being entirely reconstructed.

Some very good single stories in the Nelson Lee Library this month. "The Twins' Terrible Tangle" or "The Schoolboy Detectives" - funny that the Nelson Lee tales sometimes have two titles - brought back the Trotwood Twins after a long absence, and a nautical ruffian named Captain Starkey turned up once more. Next week "The Mystery Goal-keeper" revolved round a football match between St. Frank's and the River House School.

Edwy Searles Brooks is great at creating eerie Christmas tales, and in the story in the Christmas Number "The Ghosts of Glenthorpe Manor" he was well up to form. Lots of atmosphere with snow and ice and waits and holly and phantoms. Last of the month was a Christmas

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sequel "The Secret of the Panel" or "The Yuletide Adventurers" in which Pitt & Co. find out that some bank robbers are doing the haunting business.

At the pictures we have seen Norma Talmadge in "Smilin' Through"; a fine Cecil B. de Mille production "The Ten Commandments"; Buster Keaton in two very funny ones, "Sherlock Junior" and "The Frozen North"; Lon Chaney in "Shadows", and, on Boxing Day afternoon, Douglas Fairbanks in "The Thief of Bagdad."

A good story to start off the month in the Gem. In "Saved in Secret", Tom Merry thrashes Crooke for insulting Crooke's cousin, Talbot. Crooke puts a five pound note, given him by his uncle, Colonel Lyndon, in Tom Merry's desk, and then accuses Tom of stealing it. But Talbot has taken the money from the desk and placed it in Crooke's own pocket while the rascal of the Shell was asleep. Good serious tale. But nothing else much good in the Gem this month.

"Gussy's Christmas Guests" make an enormous party at Eastwood House, so that Lord Eastwood engages an assistant butler. But a crook takes his place, and there is another scamp who is like Talbot in appearance, and there are also John Rivers and Marie Rivers. It's quite Christmassy and not a bad plot, but it never clicked with me.

Back at St. Jim's we had "Lumley-Lumley's Coup" in which Lumley is suspected of pinching a jewel box during a fire at a mansion, and Ferrers Locke turns up to explain it all. It takes some explaining. Finally "Rivals of the New House" in which Figgins and Redfern quarrel, and it was all a bit of a bore.

After Christmas Dad took us all to London and we saw a show. At least, Dad and Mum went to see "Outward Bound", a new play by Sutton Vane, a story about dead people on their way from this world to the next. Everybody's raving about it, and I daresay I would have liked it. But Doug and I went to Holborn Empire and saw a tip-top variety programme headed by the two coloured singers Layton and Johnstone, who were simply great. Layton is white-haired, and I wonder whether he is an Albino, like Zenith. He sang "When the red, red robin goes bob, bob, bobbing along."

On Christmas morning Doug gave me the new Holiday Annual. I hoped he would. A grand book. It cost six bob. The new Greyfriars story, "The Bunter Cup", though by the real Frank Richards, is not all

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that hot, but, then, I'm fed up with football cups. Much better was an old Magnet tale "The Rival Editors", about the start of the Greyfriars Herald. "The Bishop's Medal", a very old Gem tale, was also pretty good. Packed with good tales, pictures, and verse, the Holiday Annual is lovely. I intend to keep my copy always.

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## Nelson Lee Column

WINTER SEEN BY BROOKS

by R. J. Godsave

The old papers played a great part in the exciting pre-Christmas weeks with their titles heavily laden with snow and ice. Holly and Ivy played their part in the smaller decorations which attractively adorned the rest of the papers. The whole effect was seasonal and very pleasing. Even if the weather was mild and far from the old fashioned idea of a Dickensian Christmas our favoured papers saw to it that at least we had it in print.

E. S. Brooks, always good for an exciting and snowy Christmas story in the Nelson Lee Library, reached the heights in his description of heavy falls of snow and snow-drifts which blocked railway lines in the cutting and caused a stoppage of services.

When Brooks wrote of the snowdrifts in the local cuttings between Bellton and Bannington in the early 1920's, there were few cars on the roads and travel by rail was the usual method. Consequently, a severe fall of snow blocking the local lines was much more serious from the travelling point of view than it would be at the present day.

Although Brooks had written his first double Christmas number in 1916 "A Christmas of Peril", o.s. No. 78, it was the following year that the second and last double number featured the St. Frank's boys, "The Phantom of Tregellis Castle", o.s. No. 130. Since the St. Frank's Lees had only been going some eighteen months, Brooks found it necessary to concentrate on the mystery side of this story owing to the natural shortage of characters which had yet to arrive at St. Frank's.

Since only Nelson Lee, Nipper and Watson were invited by Sir Monde Tregellis West, the author could hardly write of the social side of a Christmas party which made his Christmas stories so famous in the

years to come. Detective element or not, there was plenty of snow that Christmas at Tregellis Castle. With the lawns covered, a set of foot-prints going halfway across which suddenly ceased without a return set was part of the mystery which appeared to be supernatural.

Whether the paper shortage began to show just after the first world war the Christmas number for 1918 "The Mystery of Grey Towers", o. s. No. 186, was condensed in just one issue. The Jack Mason series had just come to an end and this story was really a sequel to Norman Grey's troubled first term at St. Frank's as Jack Mason. Here again, snow and ice dominated the neighbourhood of Grey Towers as Sir Edward Handforth and the chums of study D were to find out.

Some of Brooks' best series seemed to appear either just before and just after his Christmas stories. The Colonel Clinton series started the year 1919. Here the snow, ice and slush had full reign with the unfortunate College House juniors forced to drill and go on route marches during this bad weather.

The Christmas holidays were generally spent by the St. Frank's juniors at one of the ancestral homes of the wealthier Removites. Occasionally the holidays were spent at the school owing to illness or bad weather which prevented the boys from spending Christmas as usual. An interesting story of this nature was "The Schoolboy Santa Claus", o. s. No. 446. Heavy snow storms caused some farm cottages to be isolated in the village and the St. Frank's boys came to the rescue of these unfortunates and played St. Claus to the children. Also a local boy making good after some years' absence makes entrancing reading.

The New Year of 1925 opened with the famous Dr. Karnak series which now appeared to be the pattern set by Brooks. This year began and ended with a fascinating series. The end was one of Brooks' best Christmas stories. The setting was Lord Dorriemore's Castle in Derbyshire. The actual story starts at a break-up party given by the Moor View girls to the St. Frank's juniors. How Willy Handforth and his two friends gate-crashed the party and their revenge at being thrown out starts a series of misfortunes for Lord Dorriemore's uninvited guests. A graphic description of a snowed-up train and a walk from the railway track through thick snow to the Castle makes this an outstanding series. William Napoleon Brown played a leading part together with Willy

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Handforth which, as the readers of the Nelson Lee knew, guaranteed an exciting story.

The present generation of schoolboys are denied the excitement which the old papers gave to those of us who were fortunate enough to live in those pleasant times.

"ROSES IN DECEMBER"

by William Lister

It was the year 1933. In the small mission hall the Rev. W. Dunn was preaching his farewell sermon. At seventy-three years of age he was retiring. He had chosen the title "Roses in December" for his last address to us. It was based on reminiscence; it was a time for remembering incidents from his long ministry of the gospel. I was just twenty-one years old and as I listened I wondered if the time would come when I too would have "Roses in December". Forty-two years have come and gone. Years in which the papers that reigned supreme in our schooldays and youth have vanished from the counters of our newsagents. With them also disappeared those glorious Christmas and Christmas double numbers of the "Nelson Lee", the "Union Jack" and the "Magnet". Those Christmas numbers are among my roses in December.

The memory is sweet. How I looked forward to the early days of December, to tramping through the snow to purchase my "Nelson Lee" and not only the "Nelson Lee" for it was Yuletide and the little extra cash that came my way simply had to be spent on those other Christmas numbers that lured me from their place on the counter, announcing that they were the "Union Jack" and the "Magnet".

Oh, those magnificent Yuletide covers. The names "Nelson Lee", "Union Jack" and "Magnet" are simply agogwith snow. Snow that runs down the letters and dripped off as icicles at a point further down the page. Sometimes the artists would really go to town and I would stand in the street gazing at those cover pages laced with bright red Holly berries - deep green prickly leaves - steaming hot Christmas puddings, topped with white sauce; to say nothing of miniature Christmas trees in all their glory displayed on the outer edges of the title page.

All these things combined to make up the lore and glamour of Christmas. Between those covers lay tales of favourite schoolboys and detectives themselves wrapped in Christmas adventures, snowdrifts -

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parties - ghosts - and a hundred thrills.

The years have rolled by, and I haven't seen much snow at Christmas down our way lately, neither do I walk out of my newsagents clutching such treasures. But if you happen to be a subscriber to "Collectors' Digest" you too will have Roses in December.

As a collector or borrower of the old papers, you can view those seasonable covers of yesteryear (a little faded - perhaps). You will read again of your favourite characters living it up in Christmas scenes that take one's breath away. The titles of these stories alone are able to infuse you with the Yuletide spirit. Here are a few, taken at random, that unite our favourites for the Christmas season.

A few from the "Nelson Lee" include "A Christmas of Peril", "The Phantom of Tregellis Castle", "The Ghost of Glenthorne Manor", "The Ghosts of Dorrimore Castle", "Handforths Ghost Hunt", "The Mystery of Raithmere Castle" and "Christmas at Travis Dene".

Now, curtains up for the Union Jack - "A Christmas Crime", "The Haunted Priory", "The Christmas Circus Mystery", "The Ghost of Ashleigh", "A Christmas Card Crime", "Sexton Blake's Christmas Box" and of course, the one everybody knows "Mrs. Bardell's Christmas Pudding", a Glyn Evans treat.

"The Magnet" rises to the occasion with "Billy Bunter's Christmas Dream", "The Ghost of Maulevever Towers", "The Soames Christmas" and "Christmas at Hilton Hall".

There are many more Yuletide titles, these are but a few of them, enough perhaps to bring carols to your tongue and the spirit of Christmas to your heart. After all, breathes there a reader of "Collectors' Digest" who never to his friends has said:-

"A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year". It is the season for your Roses in December.

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WANTED: Bullseye 14-18; 40-48; 89, 90, others. Film Fun around No. 570. Also issues of 5/8/33; Surprise 1-10; Gem 235, 713/4/5. Buy/Exchanges.

SUTTON, 41 SWALECLIFF AVE., MANCHESTER M23 9DN

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WANTED: Mickey Mouse Weekly's and other English comics by collector. Write:-

D. TALBOT, LOT 53, GREENGLADE COURT, NOBLE PARK, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

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# BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

The author of our article on Waldo this month wants to know something of Waldo's extraordinary powers. It turns out that the first Waldo story in the Union Jack was a Christmas tale. The number is 794, dated 28th December, 1918. Waldo is working in a Circus, billed as Waldo the Wonder Man, because of his feats of physical endurance and a total lack of feeling any pain. A note at the end of the story may give the answer Mr. Cure wants. It is as follows:

"There is an actual case on record, described in a recent issue of the Lancet, of a man who can neither feel pain, cold nor heat. His body is covered with scars of wounds and burns inflicted on himself. He will hold a burning match to his skin and then carelessly pick off the charred epidermis without feeling the slightest pain. Author."

May I now take this opportunity of wishing all of you a Happy Christmas with lots of good things to read after your Christmas dinner. Also if anyone has a bit of spare time will they please write me something for Blakiana. Material is very short. Thank you.

JOSIE PACKMAN

## IT WAS AN AGE OF WONDER

by Raymond Cure

It was an age of Space travel - an age of Iron men - an age of Death Rays - an age of mysterious ships which sailed beneath the sea - an age of equally mysterious machines that tunnelled beneath the earth. It was an age of prehistoric monsters of weird and wonderful shape. It was also the age of the Old Boys' Papers (though of course the Old Boys weren't so old then), ask any reader of the Bullseye, the Boys' Magazine or the Wizard. It was an age when Public Schools were at their best and the scholars the envy of us run-of-the-mill fellows, or didn't you read the Magnet, Gem or the Nelson Lee? It was an age when many wonders appeared in the realm of fiction, some of which have now become fact.

However, there were other wonders to delight the eye and mind of the readers of the weeklies. The Union Jack featured on occasions,

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criminals of tremendous brain and physical powers and none more amazing than the powers of Waldo the Wonder Man. A most worthy opponent of Sexton Blake, a man capable of the most amazing physical feats that often kept him out of the hands of the law and of Sexton Blake.

Smaller fry, such as you and me, would have been "pipped at the post" so to speak. I mean, no sooner the crime had been done, we would have been done. If escaping the arm of the law means leaping through the second floor window onto the lawn below or jumping some high wall or gate then crime is not for me. I travel at such a speed the village policeman would consider me "a fair cop".

Not so, Waldo; take that day after a hectic car chase, Sexton Blake landed his quarry at Tower Bridge just as the sections parted to allow the passage of a sea vessel. The two sections rising pyramid fashion into the air leaving an eight foot gap. Blake, jumping out of his car to pursue Waldo shouts "You've had it now" (or words to that effect) but our wonder man bunches his muscles and "Woo-ee" he leaps that gap and away, and Sexton Blake? well, he knows his limitations.

Now don't get me wrong, this Waldo in spite of police trouble seems to be a likeable chap. There are those that say that Edwy Searles Brooks (the chap who discovered Waldo) stretched his imagination too far on occasions. But as always time will tell. Here am I, nearly forty years after sitting in front of my TV set and there performing before my very eyes are The Champions, two men and a woman endowed with extraordinary powers by some strange people who rescued them after their plane crashed in Tibet. Then there is the new series of stories about "The Six-million Dollar Man" performing amazing feats on my TV screen. After his space ship crashed he was fitted up with wires, etc., to become an indestructible master spy. So please don't tell me our "Edwy" had an excess of imagination, in fact on occasion he lags behind our modern script writers. Mind you, I will admit that in the two cases mentioned we are told not only of these strange powers but from whence they came, but I am not so sure that applies to Waldo. Did his power come naturally or was it supernatural? It is possible I missed the original story so perhaps some expert on Sexton Blake lore could inform me.

Well now, you can see what Blake is up against. Not just the

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murderous thug type or the master-mind type, but also crooks of tremendous physical powers.

Further information and a full record of the above statement can be found in "Waldo's Way Out", U. J. No. 1501 and "Red Sand" No. 1507, in the Union Jack. Both tales are available from the Sexton Blake Librarian.

BY PERMISSION OF GRAYDON GARTH

by S. Gordon Swan

Although better known as the creator of Nelson Lee, Maxwell Scott also ranks as a Sexton Blake author, having written several UNION JACKS during the 1913-14 period. And as early as 1905 he wrote a story entitled "Sexton Blake, or The Clique of Death", which appeared as a serial in THE JESTER. This tale dealt with the great detective's adventures in tracking down a big crime-ring, similar to that organisation which Nelson Lee combated in that fine story, "Birds of Prey".

Like other writers for the Amalgamated Press, Maxwell Scott's literary activities were not confined to that publishing house. He also wrote for THE BIG BUDGET, which was published by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., and in this paper he created another detective, Kenyon Ford.

In No. 183, dated 15th December, 1900, which was a Christmas Double Number, there appeared a long complete story called "The Keepers of the Vow", by Maxwell Scott. This was a novel yarn, inasmuch as it introduced both Graydon Garth and Kenyon Ford. Now Graydon Garth, as old-time readers will remember, was created by Sidney Drew, of Ferrers Lord and Ching-Lung fame. How did this combination of fictional characters by different authors come about? The explanation was given at the head of the story by reproducing a letter from Sidney Drew to Maxwell Scott, in what was apparently a facsimile of the former's handwriting.

Pretoria,  
South Africa,

My Dear Maxwell Scott,

I was delighted to receive your letter and also amazed. The pencilled page from Mr. Kenyon Ford's note-book I return herewith. I think it is one of the most fascinating of all the

famous detective's cases. Until your letter came to hand I was quite unaware that Mr. Graydon Garth and Mr. Kenyon Ford had ever met professionally. I regret the delay in answering your letter, but I had very great difficulty in communicating with Mr. Graydon Garth whose permission was necessary before your story could be published.

Your generosity in placing Mr. Ford's note-book of marvels at my service and asking me to write the story myself, as the chronicler of the millionaire's adventures, is only what I might have expected of you, but as the names of Kenyon Ford and Maxwell Scott are so closely linked together I feel that it would be presumptuous on my part to attempt the story. I admit I envy you the possession of that priceless note-book and I enclose the cablegram from Mr. Graydon Garth authorising you to publish the details of one of his most amazing adventures.

With best wishes.

SIDNEY DREW

It is not within the province of this article to review the story in question. Briefly, it may be stated that it dealt with a band of Italian Anarchists who planned to assassinate all the heads of the European Royal families, also the Presidents of France and the U. S. A. It tells of how Kenyon Ford joined the gang and frustrated some of their attempts, how his identity was discovered and how Graydon Garth came to his rescue. Maxwell Scott allocated to his fellow-author's character the honour of stepping in at the eleventh hour and rounding up the gang.

One wonders whether it was Maxwell Scott's idea to combine Kenyon Ford and Graydon Garth in one story, or if it was an editorial inspiration. Whatever the reason, this story dating back nearly three-quarters of a century throws an interesting sidelight on two writers who contributed to the Sexton Blake Saga.

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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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DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 123 - SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY No. 89 - "HARRY  
WHARTON'S CHRISTMAS NUMBER"

Stories about schoolboys' amateur magazines can easily become tiresome: the difficulties that the editors encounter are usually predictable, and the successful publication of the magazine often falls a little flat as a climax.

Although Schoolboys' Own Library, No. 89, was a reprint of two odd Magnet stories (296 and 306), there was a unity of theme that made the reprint a very well integrated story. Fisher T. Fish had paid a visit to St. Jim's and noted that the juniors there ran a school paper. He felt that it was time that Greyfriars followed suit, and thus the Greyfriars Herald was born. The Removites purchased an old-fashioned printing machine from Mr. Lazarus, and a struggle began between Fishy on the one hand and Harry Wharton & Co. on the other, concerning the editorship and the material to be used in the magazine.

There were the usual cunning tricks and horseplay, but the story also provided some unexpected touches of humour. The extracts read out by budding authors were highly amusing, and even the Famous Five were gently guyed by Charles Hamilton, whilst Bunter was classed among that group of conceited people who thought that they could successfully write if they only had the time. The most amusing sections were Fishy's attempts to raise advertisement revenue, first from Mrs. Mible ("We've got the tarts - you've got the tummies") and then from Dr. Locke. As part of a plan to put Greyfriars on a proper business footing, the American junior suggested dismissing all the present staff, who were expensive, and replacing them with men on reduced salaries. The slogan offered to the astonished Head was "We've got the school - you've got the boy."

Even though there were not many stories about the Greyfriars Herald, its ramifications were extensive. Not only did it appear in the centre pages of later Magnets at various times, but it also enjoyed an existence as a separate publication in two different series. This must have been the only case where fictitious schoolboys whose exploits were chronicled in one paper contrived to publish a magazine which was on sale to the public as a separate paper. It is hardly surprising that some

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bewildered readers even thought that Greyfriars really existed.

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LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 197. HARRY WHARTON'S CHRISTMAS

In December, exactly fifty years ago, the First Wharton, the Rebel, series was in full swing. Danny reminds us of that this month, though, naturally, he did not describe the series in those terms.

Danny had no means of knowing, when he scribbled in his diary, that, eight years later, Wharton would be starring in yet another rebel series, very similar yet, paradoxically enough, very different.

December 1924 was the month the Magnet grew up. At that time it took on an aura which it has never lost even to this day.

The First Rebel series was an adult study of school life, and, idly, one wonders what boyhood thought of it fifty years ago. In scores of series there were scores of contrivances to produce happy endings. In this series there were many contrivances, but their purpose was to prolong the agony. And so well written was it that an agony it was.

Misunderstanding piled on misunderstanding. And authors are on slippery ground with this sort of thing, for nothing can be more tedious than misunderstandings which irritate. It says much for the author that the misunderstandings in this first Rebel series did not irritate; they merely saddened.

The wicked seemed to triumph endlessly. And, at the end of this superb series, there was no contrivance to bring about a happy ending, for there was no happy ending. The reader had never been in clover, and, though we all give this wonderful set of stories its due today, I cannot help feeling that plenty of young readers were not sorry when it ended, about fifty years ago. It was a series with no light relief, and it contained a plot which developed continuously as the young hero of the story went from bad to worse.

In all the changing sequences, probably the Christmas items are the most memorable. Not that it was a happy Christmas for the reader. Harry Wharton, at loggerheads with all his own friends, went to Monte Carlo with the Bounder. Frank Richards told us: "As a matter of fact, they were ill-assorted companions, and both of them realised it rather

late." And: "So the run on the railway to Nice was dull enough for both of them. Both were dissatisfied, though trying hard to keep cordial."

The inevitable split came. The story ended: "This was his Christmas, and it was his own fault, and he knew it now. In far-off England, Nugent and Johnny Bull, Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh, were perhaps thinking of their absent chum, sorry for his absence, sorry for the headstrong temper that had caused it; wondering, perhaps, how he was getting on with the Bounder. And this was Harry Wharton's Christmas!"

The following story was apparently entitled "Frank Nugent's Christmas Party" by the author, but changed to "Friends or Foes?" by the editor or possibly due to second thought by the author. Harry Wharton returned to England, and sent a wire to Frank Nugent who was at home with his party of friends in Wiltshire. Bunter intercepted the wire, and the rift between the friends widened. One of the unhappy aspects of this splendidly sad series was the total unpleasantness and rascality of Billy Bunter who, in some ways, was out of character.

So Harry Wharton finished his Christmas as a guest of Jimmy Silver at the Priory in Wiltshire, and, happily enough, featured successfully in an episode of the Rookwood holiday series in the Boys' Friend.

\* \* \* \* \*

### REVIEW

#### THE SPECTRE OF ST. JIM'S

Martin Clifford  
(Howard Baker Press: £3.20)

This is an attractive volume, feeling good and looking good, with its delightful, seasonable dust-jacket in red, white, and blue. It contains a sequence of eight Gems of late 1934, and, unfortunately, it happens to be a part of the re-print period when the St. Jim's stories were abridged. So, though the yarns come from 1911, when the blue Gem was in its heyday, it was a time when the editor tried to give a "full supporting programme", which could only be done by a mutilation of the star attractions.

Top of the bill is the 3-story Congo series, a period piece of great charm. Actually, the Congo adventure does not occupy much more than one story, as the remarkable opening tale "Under Sealed Orders"

explains how the strange trip came about, while the third tale is mainly about Tom Merry, back at St. Jim's, with M'Pong, the black man who refused to be parted from his beloved young master. It makes fascinating reading. Two of these three yarns were published in the Boys' Friend Library in 1920, with the lovely title "Under Sealed Orders."

More serious was the shortening of the title story "The Spectre of St. Jim's" which, as "The Ghost of St. Jim's", had formed the chief attraction of the Christmas Double Number of the Gem in 1911. It was something of a psychological thriller, particularly memorable on account of the eerie atmosphere which the author wove into it as the White Monk of St. Jim's trod his way through the snow of the quadrangle and the panelled corridors of the old school. In this reprint version of 1934, half the tale was chopped away, and, inevitably, it lost much of its atmosphere and a good deal of its suspense.

"The Outsider's Enemy" (originally "A False Chum" in 1911) is an excellent, tense drama of much novelty, starring Lumley-Lumley, Levison, and Cousin Ethel. "D'Arcy's Double" had the same title in 1911, and concerns a Grammar School prank which went wrong. It is packed with inconsequential fun. "Figgy's Dark Hour" ("When a Boy's Down" in 1911) is a good dramatic tale. Finally "He Didn't Play the Game" had, in 1911, the better title of "For His School's Sake". Whatever they chose to call it, we have a rattling good school story which puts the seniors of St. Jim's in the limelight.

The pruning of this particular period was regrettable, but, with the possible exception of the ghost story, the tales in this volume are really but little spoiled, and they will be enjoyed to the full, particularly by those who are not too well acquainted with the original blue Gem versions.

Also in the volume is the complete serialised version of "Handforth, the Ghost-Hunter" which relates the adventures of a big party of St. Frank's boys and Moor View girls at a Christmas party at Handforth Towers in Norfolk. Edwy Searles Brooks was a master at writing a spooky story which kept his readers puzzled and their nerves on edge. He is in good form with this one.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Our Classic Serial from Edwardian Days

THE CIRCUS RIDERS

The naphtha lamps of Signor Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus were blazing away, and three men in uniform were playing discordantly on brass instruments at the entrance of the big tent.

Although there were thirty minutes before the grand performance was due to commence, a big crowd of schoolboys and villagers thronged the circus ground.

A group of boys wearing the Greyfriars School caps were standing before a big poster which had been pasted on the wall of the large tent.

"My only hat!" gasped one of the boys, a curly-haired lad. "A cup valued at ten pounds."

"Does it really say that, Wharton?" said the fat junior standing next to him.

"Of course it does, Billy. Can't you see for yourself?"

"Solid silver, too!"

"The silver is solidful," assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Hindu junior, in the extraordinary English he had not acquired at Greyfriars School.

"I shall go in for that, you chaps," announced Bunter. "Really, I don't see what there is to laugh at."

"What? Stick on the horse's back for five minutes?"

"Yes."

"But you can't ride, you ass," laughed Frank Nugent, who was in the same form - the Remove - as Billy Bunter.

"I think I can count that cup as good as won," replied Bunter.

"I don't believe you have ever been

on a horse's back in your life."

"You'll see!"

"Bounding Joe's a good name for a buck-jumper," mused Harry Wharton.

"I believe you chaps are frightened of the name."

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"Well, I suppose I shall have to represent the old school," said Billy Bunter, readjusting the huge pair of spectacles he was wearing.

"I think I shall have a shot," said Wharton.

Billy Bunter blinked at Wharton, the captain of the Remove at Greyfriars.

"You?" he gasped.

"Yes, rather! I intend to stick on Joey's back for --"

"Hear, hear, sonny!"

The boys turned their heads and looked at the painted face of Joseph Montgomery Pye, the mirth-merchant of Tomsonio's circus and hippodrome.

Mr. Pye was wearing a fool's cap and the usual clown's garb, and his little, fat figure looked very funny.

"Have you recovered from that terrible kick you received this morning?" he asked, turning to Billy Bunter.

"Not quite," replied the fat junior. "There's a fearful bruise, and I shall put it down to that if I don't win that solid silver cup."

"And you are going in for it, my lad?"

"Yes, rather."

Joey Pye rolled his big eyes.

"How sad it will be!" he murmured.  
"A smart lad with remarkable imagination and stowing capacity, cut off in his prime."

"What do you mean?"

"It will be Bounding Joe's eighteenth victim."

"The eighteenth victim?" gasped Billy Bunter.

Joey Pye looked up at the stars overhead.

"I think the last man he threw was the saddest case of all," he muttered.

Harry Wharton and the others could see that Joey was "getting at" Bunter, and they could hardly suppress their mirth.

"Why, what was that?" said Billy, blinking up at Mr. Pye's face.

"It was two weeks ago, and Joe had been sulking just as he has been to-day."

"Yes, yes, go on."

"The signor had made the same offer - a cup valued at a thousand pounds --"

"Ten pounds!" spluttered Bob Cherry.

"I stand corrected," said Joey. "Well, a man named Bill Bailey entered the ring and mounted the buck-jumping bronco."

"Well?"

"Right in the prime of his life," sighed Mr. Pye. "I remember how poor Mrs. Bailey sang those pathetic words of a night time."

"What words?" gasped the inquisitive Billy Bunter.

"Won't you come home, Bill Bailey?" gulped Joey Pye.

Bunter blinked at the laughing juniors, and then turned to Joey who was still gazing up at the stars.

"Well, of course, that alters things. I can't be expected to risk my life, splendid rider as I am, just to win a rotten silver cup. I know you chaps are jealous of my wonderful

abilities --"

Bob Cherry cut short Billy's remarks by putting his hand across the fat junior's mouth.

"Don't you think we might have a look at Bounding Joe?" suggested Harry Wharton to Mr. Pye.

"Sonny, I have ten minutes more to spare, and in that time I shall show you a portion of Signor Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus. I suppose you are going in later to see the most remarkable performance ever placed before the B. P.?"

"The B. P.?"

"Yes, the British Public."

"Oh, rather. We're all going in."

"Bob seats?"

"Yes."

"Well, come along, gentlemen. It's a pleasure."

Mr. Pye led the way in the direction of a long tent.

"I will show you Bounding Joe first of all," he said.

They entered the tent, which was divided up into some twenty stalls, and the clown singled out an old bay cob.

Tom Brown, one of the group of juniors, tugged at Bunter's sleeve, and whispered to him.

"Billy, I've got a wheeze."

"About that feed you spoke of yesterday --"

"No."

"Well, what is it?"

"Make this nag talk to the clown. Use your ventriloquial voice."

Billy Bunter grinned, and cleared his throat. The fat junior had spent months and months practising ventriloquism, and at Greyfriars School had played many tricks

with his extraordinary power, which he had got to almost perfect pitch now.

"This is Bounding Joe, gentlemen," said Mr. Pye. "A really most marvellous buck-jumper."

"Liar!"

The horse had been eating some hay, and as he gulped down a wisp Billy Bunter threw his own voice to the champing jaws,

"Good gracious!"

Joey Pye staggered back in alarm.

"Yes, it's a lie," came from the horse's mouth. "As a matter of fact, I used to pull a cab."

The juniors guessed where the mysterious voice came from, and they roared with laughter.

The clown's fool-cap fell to the ground, and the horse blinked at it.

"What ass wears that?"

Signor Tomsonio, the genial proprietor of the circus, came strutting into the tent.

"What are you doing here, Joey?" he demanded. "In twenty minutes time the show is due to commence. You ought to be outside inflicting some of your stale jokes on the public."

"Old Joe's been talking," said Joey Pye.

"Talking!" shouted the circus proprietor.

"Yes," gasped Mr. Pye. "These boys will bear me out --"

"I'm surprised at you, Joey. I can understand a foreigner like Herr Biberach drinking too much, but you - you, a Britisher!"

"I tell you that Joe talked."

"Don't be an idiot."

Billy Bunter smiled and cleared his voice as the signor hesitated. Old Joe shook his head at a convenient moment.

"I talked all right."

"It's a trick," gasped Signor Tomsonio.

"No, signor. Old Joe --"

The horse turned his head once more, and Billy Bunter threw his ventriloquial voice again.

"I shan't talk any more to-night. I'm tired."

"Wonderful!" muttered Signor Tomsonio. He turned to Joey. "Get to the front entrance, and do your stuff."

"Right-ho, signor."

The boys, on getting into the open air again, crowded round Billy Bunter and smacked him on the back in their praise of his jape. Then they hurried away towards the entrance of the big tent.

Joey Pye was calling out to the crowd.

"Come along, folks, walk up.

Prices to suit all pockets. Come and see Clotilde, the Queen of the Ring. See her wonderful performance on Mahomet, the famous black Arab. See Samson, the Strong Man, break a cigarette in half. See Jungle Jack, the boy lion-tamer, with Julius and Julia, the wild animals."

The crowd walked up in their hundreds. The juniors, known as Harry Wharton & Co., streamed into the big tent, and although it was rapidly filling up, they managed to get the row of seats nearest the ring.

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"There's old Quelch over there."

"Hanged if Wingate and North aren't there with him," added Frank Nugent.

The wheezy strain of the band floated into the tent, and every face looked expectant and happy. The place seemed to be full of pupils from Greyfriars School -

not only of juniors, but prefects - and here and there a Form-master.

Signor Tomsonio was standing at the entrance to the ring, and his face had lost the puzzled look it bore when Billy Bunter made old Joe talk.

He turned to Joey Pye, who was now standing next to him.

"Go on, Joey," he said. "It's time to begin."

(ANOTHER INSTALMENT OF THIS OLD STORY NEXT MONTH)

# The Postman Called

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

BILL LOFTS (London): The word "substitute" was certainly used as early as the First World War. An editor told me that Mr. Hamilton at that time, thought that the German word "ersatz" was far better than "substitute", and he (Hamilton) used to make a quip about it, which I cannot now recall. I can also well remember meeting a substitute writer who wrote in the early twenties, and he got quite heated about the word "substitute". He said he tried to get the term altered to 'alternative' writers, but the name had stuck.

MOLLIE ALLISON (Leeds): I am enjoying the faithful C. D. as much as ever. Danny is approaching the era when I started my film-going career, and I am looking forward to his remarks on my early favourites.

LEON STONE (Australia): I would like to say how thoroughly my good friend Cliff Howe, of Adelaide, and I are enjoying the series "Biography of a Small Cinema." I'm one of the few who remember Johnny Hines well.

JOHN WALLEN (Liverpool): The standard of work in C. D. is as brilliant as ever, but I rather think that the club news is given too much space. The recent suggestion in C. D. , calling for "New Greyfriars stories" was, in my opinion, ridiculous. We see this suggestion in its true light when taken to its logical extreme - "New Mozart".

MARY CADOGAN (Beckenham): I love the covers and the illustrations and look forward to the rest of the series on famous artists' work. Congratulations to Alf Hanson.

I enjoyed the first instalments of THE CIRCUS RIDERS: these early stories must be appreciated by many readers like myself who never



saw the papers published during the first two decades of this century. It is of course difficult to find room in the C. D. for everyone's request, but I have always been glad to see the occasional reprinted story there. The drama of the cinema series is hotting up - Mr. Jones could have been the villain in one of the old papers! I like the sound of Joan Crawford in 'Our Dancing Daughters', but I have never had the chance to see this film.

M. PERRY (London): Any chance in the near future of an article on Hamiltonia in the Boys' Friend Library, please? I find the B. F. L. very interesting.

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### BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

#### No. 9. A BUTCHER FILM.

The more I look at those old booking lists of so long ago, the more I marvel at doing business with so many different firms. In some ways it was not unlike our favourite author spilling his stories by cluttering them up with too many characters.

Quite a few years were to pass before it occurred to me that it would be more advantageous to take our bookings from a very few renters, thereby making our business more worth while to them. As it was, our business was spread thinly over a number of companies, with First National Pathe still getting quite a big slice.

This term we ran our first Butcher's films. Butcher's were a small but very old-established firm. Everything they released, so far as I remember, fell more into the "second feature" class of film, running usually for just over an hour of playing-time. They very rarely featured in our programmes. The two we played this term were Walter Ford in "Wait and See", and Paul Richter in "The Centre Forward".

I see we billed "Wait and See" as "the first British Super Comedy", and that was probably the reason which took me to Butcher's in the first place. I seem to recall that Walter Ford was hailed as a great new British comedian, on the lines of Chaplin, rather as Syd Field was to be hailed a bit later. What became of Walter Ford I do not know, but I think he never went very far on the screen.

Years later, after the war, we played two Butcher films which were very popular with the public, not because they were really great films, but because they had a good story line. One of these was "I'll Walk Beside You", and another starred Sonia Dresdel and featured the lovely music of the "Song of Olwen". Sonia Dresdel had starred in the play at "Q" Theatre, which was later made into the "Song of Olwen" film. It was novel, with fine seascape photography, and a good musical score.

For years I said that Fox was the only major renter with which we never

booked films. I find, however, that we did run a few silent films from Fox. The one this term was "Three Naval Rascals" starring George O'Brien and Louis Moran, whoever they were. A year or two later Fox became 20th Century Fox (about 1933) and I approached them as I wanted to play "Cavalcade." They wouldn't let me have it, and I never went to them again. "Cavalcade" was one of the first films put out under the 20th Century trademark. It was the only time I was ever refused a booking of a film I wanted to show. It was an example of the stupidity of spreading the business over too many firms. Had I been prepared to offer a half-dozen additional dates, I have no doubt that I should have got "Calvalcade".

From First National this term came Johnny Hines in "Chinatown Charlie" (several readers have written to tell me that they well remember Johnny Hines); Ken Maynard in "Gun Gospel"; Mary Johnson in a big circus spectacular "Life's Circus"; Richard Barthelmess in "The Noose"; Ken

Maynard in "The Canyon of Adventure"; and Richard Barthelmess in "The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come". Universal sent us House Peters (what a name!) and Ruth Clifford in "The Tornado"; Reginald Denny in "Clear the Decks". Ever-reliable P.D.C. supplied Ralph Graves in "Playing the Game", and Eddie Gribbon with Lila Lee in "The Fighting Marine".

Our serial this term was "Belphegor", lauded by the critics as the best serial ever made. I think it likely that there has been no better one to this day. Also in the programmes were educational subjects, 2-reel comedies including a couple of new "Snookums" releases and Charlie Murray in "Hogan's Aristocratic Dream", plus, of course, the regular news reels and the trailers on forthcoming attractions. Two series of cartoons were "Out of the Inkwell" and "Togo and Dinky." Anyone remember them?

(ANOTHER ARTICLE IN THIS SERIES SOON)

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WANTED: S.O.L. No. 27. I will pay £3 for a copy in good condition with original covers.

W. SETFORD, 155 BURTON ROAD, DERBY.

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Thomson papers required to complete my collection:-

ADVENTURE, 1946-1952. 1171, 1173-78, 1181, 1183, 1185-87, 1189-91, 1193-1202, 1204, 1205, 1210-12, 1214-20, 1222-28, 1230, 1231, 1234-39, 1243-1248, 1250-52, 1255, 1256, 1258-61, 1270, 1271, 1282-86, 1289, 1290, 1292-1302, 1308, 1310-12, 1315, 1324-26, 1329, 1334, 1343-53, 1355, 1357, 1362-65, 1372-73, 1376-78, 1386, 1388, 1396, 1398-99, 1402-06.

HOTSPUR. 690, 695-99, 701-09, 711-15, 717-18, 722-724, 727, 731-37, 742-43, 748-55, 757, 761, 763-77, 779-80, 786-792.

ROVER. 1950 complete year required. 1951, 1332-36, 1338, 1345, 1349 to end of year.

WIZARD. 1945-1951. 1087-1110, 1119-1168, 1174-97, 1199-1222, 1224-1298, 1301-09, 1311-1400.

GUY N. SMITH, CAERLAVEROCK, 87 BROWNS LANE,  
 TAMWORTH, STAFFS. Telephone TAMWORTH 62309

WANTED: Greyfriars Herald's 1915 - 1921. Magnets 469 - 727, 1651 - 1664. Gems 479 - 521. C.D. Annuals 1960-1. TMO's.

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 "Greyfriars Howard Baker volumes." Editions from Nos. 1 to 26 inclusive, in perfect condition. Cost over £70. Offers please to

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## NEWS OF THE CLUBS

### MIDLAND

Nine members answered 'Adsum' at the October meeting roll call. Tom Porter brought along a fascinating collectors' item: a mint copy of the diminutive Nugget Library, number 52, 'Expelled from St. Frank's', circa 1921. Tom gave a potted history of the Nugget Library, a publication virtually unknown to his audience.

The programme continued with a discussion about dealers in old boys books, the contacts and financial transactions, hilarious and dubious, experienced by club members.

The evening concluded with a reading by chairman Warwick Setford from his own story 'The Battle of the Beaks'.

Next meeting 7.30 p.m., 17th December, usual venue, Dr. Johnson House, Birmingham.

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### CAMBRIDGE

#### Meeting held 10th November

The Secretary reported that a Collectors' Fair was to be held at the International Centre, Cambridge, on 6th December.

Bill Lofts gave an interesting talk on Publishers. He traced the careers of small firms which had failed, comparing them with giants like the Amalgamated Press. Before the war a circulation of 40,000 copies made a paper viable; the figure now is 250,000. A discussion followed.

The Secretary read a paper on flying stories, including some Scout and Jack, Sam & Pete tales. He said his paper owed its inspiration to an article by Jack Overhill, in the East Anglia Magazine, on his own memories of the pre-1914 army airships, Gamma and Beta. Other members recalled the R-class airships and the Graf Zeppelin.



NORTHERN

Saturday, 9th November, 1974

We were on this occasion happily and comfortably ensconced in a well-lighted, well-carpeted upper room at the Swarthmore Educational Centre, at which venue all future meetings will be held until notification to the contrary appears in these pages.

First, a story sheet compiled by Frank Hancock and prepared by Ron Hodgson, though you couldn't read the story until you had filled in the missing words, all of which were Hobby names, ranging in scope from (inevitably) Bunter to Bonny Bluebell!

Tying in first place with 40 each were Geoffrey Wilde and Ron Rhodes, second came Bill Williamson with 38 and third Keith Balmforth with 36½.

To round off the evening we were entertained by Harold Truscott, who recounted and illustrated a number of curious things he had come across in the Hobby.

Firstly, the other Greyfriars - for someone (not Hamilton) wrote about 'Greyfriars School' in 1907. The only similarity was the name, for the school was not our Greyfriars and the style was totally unlike Hamilton.

The second concerned the story by Harry Dorrian running currently in C.D. It was evidently published after the Magnet had started, yet the style is so utterly unlike Hamilton. If it is genuinely Hamilton, then one can only suppose that it was written long before its publication date and before the author had developed his Magnet style.

Harold then mentioned and read to us an excerpt from the Wally Bunter series, in which Hoskins requires a flautist and is delighted to learn that Wally can play!

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The curious and annoying thing is that the Popular in 1926, republished the episode in its entirety - but put Bunter in Wally's place!

Our next meeting will be the party, when we shall be pleased to welcome families and friends, but notification first, please, to Mollie Allison, 29 Eden Crescent, Leeds 4.

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### LONDON

Despite the inclement weather there was an excellent attendance at Beckenham. A hearty welcome to all was expressed by Josie Packman and this included two new local members, Richard Richards and Ron Garner.

Brian Doyle gave news of a new revised edition of E. S. Turner's "Boys Will Be Boys" which is to be published shortly.

Don Webster, up from Devon, set the entertainment side of the gathering going by conducting a fine "Mastermind" quiz. The winner was Roger Jenkins; did we see Marjorie Norris signing him up for the B. B. C. competition?

Don Webster won the hostess, Mary Cadogan's, Character Grid Competition.

Winifred Morss read two chapters from the Whiffles series of the Magnet and immediately afterwards conducted a quiz on it. Won by Bill Norris and Adam Bradford, and, in third place, David Baddiel.

Bob Blythe read extracts from the October and November 1957 newsletters.

Rounding off the proceedings was Norman Wright with a talk on the A. P. Robin Hood Library, plus a couple of chapters read from one of the issues.

An excellent repast was provided by the three hosts, Alex, Mary and Teresa Cadogan.

A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to them. Next meeting is at Courtfield, 49 Kingsend, Ruislip, Middlesex, on Sunday, 15th December. Kindly let Bob Acraman know if attending this Yuletide meeting.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

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When the 'Schoolgirls' Own' appeared on the scene in 1921, the Fourth Form at Morcove School appeared to consist of the most objectionable types of British girlhood one could imagine, who, when poor Betty Barton arrived as a scholar in the first issue, proceeded to make her life unbearable. Chief tormentors, and leaders of these unpleasant girls, were Cora and Judith Grandways, who with a weak and easy going Captain - Paula Creel, and two nasty cronies, Grace Garfield and Ella Elgood, seemed to be the most important members of the Fourth.

The Grandways sisters were from the same Lancashire town as Betty Barton, where, unfortunately, Betty's mother had been the charlady at the Grandways' home, something which Cora and Judith would not let Betty forget.

Her life was made even more miserable by a most unpleasant character called Ursula Wade, who decided to steal money from a cash box, and for which poor Betty was blamed. Ursula Wade was a definite character, absolutely appalling - a toady, sneak, liar, as well as being a thief, but Miss Marjorie Stanton (or rather, Mr. Horace Phillips) was very wise in not ever attempting to change Ursula's evil ways.

However, in No. 3 of the Schoolgirls' Own, Betty was befriended by Polly Linton, the two becoming staunch friends, and by the ninth and tenth issues, had recruited two more chums, Madge Minden and Trixie Hope. This was the commencement of Betty Barton & Co.

Other girls were now mentioned, evidently the snobbish bullies who had sided with Cora Grandways - Diana Forbes, Eva Merrick, Mabel Rivers, always had weak, changeable characters.

In spite of all obstacles, Betty Barton triumphed, and became Captain of the Fourth Form, much to Cora's rage, whose enmity against Betty continued over the years.

The next horror was a new girl, Teresa Tempest, 'The Girl Who Swanked', a real trouble maker. She was a niece of Miss Ruth Redgrave, the Junior Mistress, and with the help of Cora and Judith, promptly proceeded to discredit Betty in the eyes of the Fourth.

Teresa was vain and beautiful, and loathed Betty Barton on sight. Betty always brought out the worst in bitchy girls. But the Form turned

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against Teresa, and Betty became her only friend, resulting in the reformation of Teresa Tempest.

Laura Turner was a Sixth Form bully, who made herself most unpopular by caning Paula Creel (by this time Paula was a thoroughly nice girl). Laura was another who took to stealing, (Madge Minden's gold bracelet), but after running away from the School and joining a Circus, she turned over a new leaf.

The arch villainess of the Morcove stories was a Miss Audrey Blain. She arrived at a time when Judith Grandways had decided to reform, and immediately became a menace to our heroine - Betty Barton. Audrey, too, was rich, beautiful, and very clever, and although allowed Cora to toady to her, had designs on Madge, Paula, Trixie, and Tess Trelawney for friends. So began a vendetta against Betty, and with the exception of Polly Linton, Audrey did entice the other girls away from Betty. Of course, Madge & Co. discovered what a 'boulderess' Audrey was, and returned to Betty.

Audrey went from bad to worse, and was expelled several series later, vowing eternal hatred against Betty Barton. She cropped up twice again, once at Stormwood School under the name of Anna Blair (late 1923), and then in 1926 reappeared at Morcove School as a servant, naturally in disguise, and with the name of Florrie Blair (not very original, Blair again). From Stormwood School she was also expelled, and after the servant girl series, was heard of no more.

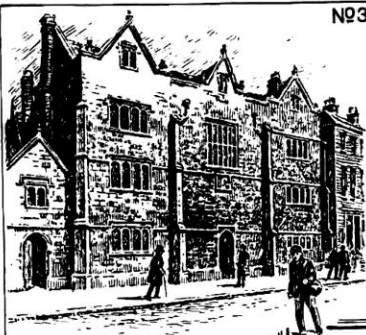
And so the bad girls came, and generally left. Myra Marshall, Inez Enderby, Enid Marchmont, all Sixth Formers, all horrible, either hating Ethel Courtway, (the School Captain) or the intrepid Betty & Co.

The Fourth had Prissy Marlowe, Hetty Curzon, Fay and Edna Denver, all unpleasant girls, but without the real venom of Audrey, Cora or Teresa.

Cora, right to her last appearance in the Schoolgirls' Own disliked Betty, and one day regretted that Judith Grandways was turned into a completely new character - Judy Cardew, a ridiculous and unfortunate situation. As Judith Grandways she was a character, as Judy Cardew she became just another girl. Dear Betty Barton, and Polly, and Madge. How we all adored you, but thank goodness there were the bitches and boulderesses to make us realise more than ever what sterling girls you really were.

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NO 3.



## E. E. BRISCOE

Very good Artist who captured a unique draughtsmanship in his Architectural scenes, especially Buildings, and gave an atmosphere of typical English period serenity.

His few early G.H.A. covers were beautifully painted and pictured the PUBLIC SCHOOL life of the time.



NO 4.  
H. M. BROCK.