

STORY PAPER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

BESSIE CRASHES *into* FILMS

Vol. 29

No. 346

OCTOBER 1975



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by
Hilda Richards

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of the early
adventures of
BARBARA REDFERN
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A
WORD
FROM THE
SKIPPER

THE AWKWARD WIVES

Early on in the Sherlock Holmes series, Watson was allowed by his creator to take a wife. But, with the increasing popularity of the great detective, and with readers demanding the continuation into a long series, a wife for Watson became a problem. Somehow, the reader

was persuaded that a doctor might find it possible to neglect his practice in order to accompany a friend in bouts of crime detection, but, though a practice could be pushed into the background, a wife would probably refuse to be subjected to such neglect. However, Conan Doyle more or less overcame the difficulty which he had himself created in a romantic moment.

Agatha Christie found herself in the same trap. At the end of her second Poirot tale, "Murder on the Links", Captain Hastings, Poirot's "Watson", took a wife and departed for South America. However, the public obviously demanded more Poirot, so, during the many more years while Hastings told his friend's cases, Mrs. Christie had to find various reasons for Hastings to neglect his wife and attach himself to the great detective.

At the end of "The King's Spy", Granite Grant married a beautiful actress. Pierre Quiroule told me long ago that there was no intention originally to write more of Granite Grant than the first story. But the public demanded more. And in the second Grant tale, the delicious and adorable Mademoiselle Julie came on the scene, and she was the obvious romantic partner for Grant. So Mrs. Grant was conveniently forgotten.

Just what happened to the three wives I am not sure. Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Hastings surely had grounds for divorce on the grounds of neglect. And what happened to Mrs. Grant might perhaps have made another case for Sexton Blake who almost always got his man - or, in this case, his woman.

NOISY STILL AND NOISIER

Years ago Aldershot, like countless other English towns, had a music hall, named in this case the Hippodrome. It was a delightful, intimate théâtre with lush carpets, sweeping curtains, and atmosphere. They pulled it down in the fifties, and replaced it with a giant boot-box on end, comprising various office. The sort of thing that happened all over the country.

Now they have built another theatre in a prestige civic hall (as elsewhere). I went the other evening to see a variety bill there. The builders had apparently never heard of acoustics. There were four acts on the bill, all pretty good in their way. But I pitied the artists

who struggled to get their art across to the audience. For the atmosphere, theatrically speaking, was dead and cold. But the din. The amplification was colossal. I noticed the same thing when I visited Wimbledon Theatre a year ago. The blast of noise was stupefying and numbing.

At Aldershot, the accompanying music was supplied by three musicians. It sounded like 50 pianos, each playing a different collection of notes (no tune, of course - just a racket) with 50 dustbins being rolled down a rocky hill together. The din was indescribable.

The singers sang into a microphone. Artists like Gracie Fields could be heard clearly all over a huge theatre, with every word distinct, without the aid of any mike. These Aldershot artists (from the Black and White minstrels) could surely have been heard from one end of Hampshire to the other (or so it seemed).

And all this ear-blasting in the sacred name of Progress!

THE ARTISTS

This month we come to the end of our present series covering the artists of the old papers. It has, I know, been an immensely popular series, and our thanks and congratulations go to Mr. Alf Hanson for the clever compositions which have been a joyous feature of our back page for the past year. Maybe, later on, we can persuade Mr. Hanson to entertain us all with a second series.

THE ANNUAL

Last month we lifted the curtain to show you some of the treasures in this year's Annual. It is impossible to list all the attractions, but here are a few more, picked out at random. Popular Leslie Rowley takes us into his favourite world of fantasy with a masterpiece entitled "Reflections in a Deserted Study"; Josie Packman goes "Round the World in 80 Years"; Len Wormull steps into previously neglected territory with "A Nugget in Search of Gold"; Jack Underhill gives us another of his priceless reminiscences in "Bookworm". All tip-top articles, not to be missed.

Have you ordered your Annual yet?

THE EDITOR

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL

Recent purchase - over 100 bound volumes of "oldies".
Boys of the Empire, Boys of England, Boys Herald (1870's),
Boys Comic Journal, Boys Leisure hour. Many others.
Going cheap! Offers considered. Getting rather "bogged
down" with Wants Lists, please chase me!

Lots of Bound Volumes, including recent purchase of bound
Boys Friends and Boys Realms. Also Bound Thrillers,
Detective Weekly, Thomsons, Modern Boy, Union Jacks,
late Magnets and Gems. You name it! I do have a rough
list of items for sale, but as stock is too large to list in
detail it gives an idea of items for sale.

Visitors very welcome to my "Aladdin's Cave", but please
ring first!

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Danny's Diary

OCTOBER 1925

There is a change in the Boys' Friend. For years and years, as long as I can remember, the pages have been divided into five columns divided by thin black lines. Now the pages are divided into four columns, with no dividing lines. I don't like the change much.

But Rookwood has been great. "An Also Ran" told more of Tubby Muffin's gold watch. It had vanished, everybody thought Putty had taken it for a joke, but Gower had taken it to pawn it in order to lay a bet on a horse. But, what a sorrow for Gower and, later, for Muffin, the watch was rolled gold, and the jeweller told Muffin, after he got it back, that it was only worth about five bob.

More fun in "The Study Ragers". The Head carried out a study inspection, and was horrified at the state of the Fistical Four's room. They thought Dodd and Co. had been ragging, and went to rag them in return. But they were too hasty, for the Three Tommies were innocent. Next week, in "Rough Justice", Tubby found out that Peele had been the ragger, and Muffin blackmailed Peele.

In "A Burning Question", Leggett told Cuffy that Lovell had fire-works in his study. Cuffy was shocked and removed them and put them under Mr. Dalton's table. Leggett, in his turn, moved them under the wood and coals in Mr. Dalton's grate. And then Mr. Dalton arrived with Mr. Manders, who was making a complaint, and Mr. Dalton lit the fire. Finally "A Duffer's Luck" was more fun with Cuffy. There was a booby-trapped woodshed and Knowles's cake which vanished. But Cuffy came through smiling at the end.

Lovely new tale in the Sexton Blake Library. It is called "The Adventure of the Albanian Avenger", partly set in London and partly in Albania, and introducing Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie.

On the last day of the month the second year of the great Wembley Exhibition was officially closed by the Duke of York. It is said that it has been a huge loss, and has only been partially saved by the military Tattoo each evening.

This month's two Schoolboys' Own Libraries have been "The

"Tyrant of Greyfriars" about a barring-out over a new Head named Jeffries, and "The Outcast of St. Jim's" about Cardew.

The first Nelson Lee of the month was "The Prisoner of the Priory", in which Fullwood finds it difficult to live down his old reputation. Eustace Carey, his cousin, is at St. Frank's, to evade the police. Carey is masquerading as Clavering, a new boy, who is held prisoner in a dungeon at the Priory.

Then came "Fullwood's Uphill Fight", with Carey still at the school in the name of Clavering. There is an exciting football match in which Fullwood disguises himself. Last of the series was "His Cousin's Dishonour" in which Carey's scheme was at last exposed, and Fullwood is able to turn over a new leaf for good.

Finally "The Schoolboy Magician" brought the start of a new series about a strange newcomer named Ezra Quirke. It promises to be thrilling and eerie.

The Gem opened with the final story of the series about Sidney Troope. Troope disappears, and there is even a rumour that he has been murdered. Entitled "Wildrake on the Trail", it told how the Canadian boy found Troope in a hovel at Redmead. Troope was the owner of the race-horse, "Koh-i-noor", which could not be run in a race if his owner were dead. I enjoyed this series, though I reckon it seemed better than it really was, owing to the rubbish which has been in the Gem lately.

Next. "Trimble the Terrible" was a long bore. Trimble modelled himself on Bob Briton, the hero in a third-rate school story.

"D'Arcy Minor's Secret", next week, was also Mr. Selby's secret. Climbing a ruined gateway for a prank, Wally saw Mr. Selby meet a man named Sneath, and, overhearing what was said, learned that Sneath was blackmailing Mr. Selby. In the sequel, it was Cardew who put paid to Sneath and was successful in "Saving Mr. Selby". A pretty good couple of tales from the real writer of the stories.

"Gussy's Good Turn" was silly, except for small boys. A boxing gorilla at a fair has a man inside a skin. The man saves Gussy from being hit by a swing-boat at the fair, but gets hurt doing so. So Gussy takes on the part of the boxing gorilla. Five pounds is offered to any spectator who knocks out the gorilla.

Nothing very outstanding at the pictures this month. We saw Jack Holt and Dorothy Dalton in "The Lone Wolf's Last Adventure"; the Rider Haggard story "Moon of Israel"; Gloria Swanson in "Her Love Story"; Bebe Daniels and Ricardo Cortez in "Argentine Love"; Reginald Denny in "Oh, Doctor"; Milton Sills and Enid Bennett in "The Sea Hawk" (this one was very good) and Lon Chaney in "The Monster".

At the local Empire they had a return of that lovely revue "Zip" starring Billy Caryl and Hilda Mundy, and also in the show was Sterndale and a Violin.

Good month in the Magnet, really, though the opening tale was damp. In "The Greyfriars Film Fans" the Famous Five made their own films and gave performances, but they included a shot of Loder, Carne, and Walker smoking and gambling, and they thought it a good idea to stop filming. I agreed with them.

"The Bounder's Way" had a lot of plot but not much else. Mr. Redwing's boat, into which he had put all his savings, was wrecked as a result of the activities of Skinner, Ponsonby & Co. However, the Bounder found out who was responsible, but an "examination proved the damage much slighter than first supposed and an estimate for repairs came to less than fifty pounds". Oh, my Auntie Climax!

Then a fine new series starring Wingate. First story was "Brother and Prefect", and Wingate finds it awkward to be both brother and prefect to Jack Wingate. Next week "The Scapegrace of the Third", which found Wingate getting more and more worry from his young brother.

Finally "His Brother's Burden". Jack Wingate is caught coming away from the Cross Keys. Rather than report his brother to the Head, George Wingate resigns his captaincy and his prefectship. A good dramatic series this one. It continues.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: S.O.L. No. 13, "The Tyrant of Greyfriars" was the five-story barring-out series from the Magnet of 1917. In the Magnet it had been something of a sensation after a long period of indifferent tales. Good, exciting writing, it put the Magnet back to the top after a period of slipping. Several ideas were first tried out in this series. Unfortunately, in the S.O.L., the five Magnets were compressed into the one issue, and the drastic pruning spoiled its impact. S.O.L. No. 14, "The Outcast of St. Jim's" comprised three Gem stories, also from 1917. A single story told of how Cardew insulted the French

master. This was followed by a couple of tales which related how Cardew had left Wodehouse School under a cloud, before he went to St. Jim's. Very readable, even though the single story did not blend in too well with the other pair to make one complete tale. The sort of thing which was sometimes evident with the S. O. L.)

* * * * *

BLAKIANA

conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

Just a few words on the subject of the Gangsters in reply to Mr. Thomas whose article appears in this month's Blakiana. Of course everyone is entitled to their own opinion of the Sexton Blake stories and the previous article on Gangsters written by me was, naturally, my own opinion. As for the New Look Blake covers, well, a good half of them showed fights and the rest were half-naked girls, not a single decent cover picture among the lot.

I do hope you will all enjoy Blakiana this month especially, as some of my correspondents have asked for something controversial to be published and here they have it.

GANGSTERS - WHERE ART THOU?

by Martin Thomas

Anyone is entitled to express an opinion or preference. But assertions made as statements of fact in the July Blakiana gangster article (top of p. 12) are so far from factual that the actual facts should be put on record.

1: It is asserted that the New Look Sexton Blake Library was "merely a repetition of the gangster period of the Union Jack with modern gunmen out to get Blake". FACT: even a glance at the New Look covers shows that the contents of most of them could not possibly be gangster stories and a mere glance into the text reveals many other stories remote from gangster fiction. In my own New Look novels, for instance, the villains include: Highland seer, Bloomsbury intellectual, femal stage performer, defecting scientist, Renaissance-style painter, research biologist, circus owner, space scientist, ex-Nazi woman doctor, naturopath, Highland laird, mental home psychiatrist, show jumper, mutation experimentalist, Chinese tong leader, a couple of

female homicidal religious maniacs ... Most of my Sexton Blake stories were whodunnits, as were many by other New Look authors. By whom I also recall investigations and assignments in Saigon, Algeria, Katanga, Spain, the Riviera, Beirut, Cyprus, en route to Baghdad, Russia, etc. And wartime assignments with the Long Range Desert Group (even that a whodunnit), in Nazi Berlin, Japanese-held Singapore, Fascist Italy and (another whodunnit) in convoy to Murmansk. Occult stories, science fiction, whimsical stories set in English suburbia, seaside, rural England and Ireland. Christmas mysteries. (Ironically, one of the last few OLD Look SBL's - No. 354 - was "Gangster's Girl":)

2: It is asserted that the UJ's gangster period brought to an end the long run of "real detective stories". FACT: The UJ's all-gangster period (which I too disliked) lasted for about ten months - and was followed by four years of weekly "real detective stories". $1\frac{1}{2}$ years in UK, $2\frac{1}{2}$ years in Detective Weekly. It was after those four years of Old Look real detective stories, fine as most of them were, that DW found it necessary to flounder in search of a profitable policy. With 'new looks' infinitely more derogatory to Blake than anything in the 1956 New Look. DW demoted him to second-feature short stories. Dropped him altogether, even Teed and Skene contributing non-Blake stories. (Including Zenith without Blake!) Blake's eventual return was only in cost-cutting rehashes of ancient stories. In the 1930's too the SBL, although not dropping Blake altogether, did slight his prestige, proficiency and pulling-power by introducing sundry tough young amateur adventurers to help carry the story and the world's greatest professional detective. One of those amateur adventurers, with his valet, usurped most of the space and limelight in the stories in which he appeared. FACT: Even though printed fiction then had no story-telling rival (television) in the home, it was during the OLD Look that the Blake saga diminished from 100 stories per year (52 weeklies and 48 monthlies) to 24.

3: It is asserted that the New Look editorial policy was to make Blake a "private eye". FACT: After the Old Look, SBL, No. 711, had presented "Sexton Blake Special Constable", the New Look editor presented Blake as a Royal Navy Surgeon-Commander, DSO. (Facing colossal odds on wartime assignments, with no tough young amateur

adventurer to hold his hand.) I find it difficult to believe that an editor/author who saw Blake as a Surgeon-Commander could also see him as a Mike Hammer or Frank Marker. And in the editor's novels of post-war Blake I see no transformation of the Surgeon-Commander into a Hammer or Marker. The Blakiana critic's definition of a private eye appears to be any detective who has emerged from the 1920's and does not live and work in a Holmesian environment. It seems to be overlooked that even Holmes was created as a contemporary character, a "with-it" investigator scorning the out-dated methods of the police. Holmes was kept up-to-date throughout his creator's lifetime and no doubt would have continued to be had Doyle lived longer. If Doyle were creating Holmes today he would not set him in an old-fashioned house of a kind no longer existing in Baker Street. To keep Blake living and working in such an environment, marooned in time as in a Lost World, would be as absurd as to keep him using a wind-up gramophone and a car with acetylene headlamps. Noteworthy that although the Sexton Blake television series were set in the wind-up gramophone age of the 1920's and the 1930's, Mrs. Bardell's dress was updated from the Victorian style she had retained in the 1930's UJ and DW. If Mrs. B's black bombazine had to go in the 1930's, the brass fender in Tinker's UJ portrait certainly had to go in the 1950's.

Those last four years of real detective stories in UJ and DW including outstanding series (Onion Men, Nigel Blake, etc.) - yet evidently sales were inadequate. WHY? Old Look editors sought remedies in demoting Blake, omitting him, giving him tough young co-heroes. In 1956 the trouble was recognised as not in the story-lines or in Blake himself - but in his old-fashioned background which had become off-putting to potential young readers in a greatly changed world. The modernisation of his background and 'image' was the last and only hope of a desperately ailing publication. The stark choice was not a New Look or more Old Look - but a modernised Blake or NO Blake. To blame the New Look for the SBL's eventual demise is like blaming for a doomed patient's eventual death the surgeon and operation that prolonged his life for several years. When the New Look did succumb it was not to any internal factor but to external factors with which the Old Look had not had to contend. Rocketing production costs

which killed off many famous story magazines and newspapers - and television, which took over printed fiction's role as story-teller to the mass public in the home. Even so, the New Look editor lifted the saga from comic-book format to the dignity of paperback and hard covers. What might he have done for the saga in the easy days of his predecessors?

THE BLAKE-LEE COMBINATION

by S. Gordon Swan

Relevant to C. H. Churchill's article in *Blakiana* for May and to Josie Packman's comments on the same, it may be added that other writers than E. S. Brooks introduced Nelson Lee and Nipper into Sexton Blake stories. I should imagine the first one to do so was Maxwell Scott.

Not having any copies of the periodical containing this particular story, I can only quote what I have read about it. If memory serves me correctly, it was called "The Winged Terror", and ran as a serial in *The Boys' Herald*. As far as Maxwell Scott was concerned, in view of the fact that he was the creator of Nelson Lee, he would have considered it a Nelson Lee story in which Sexton Blake also appeared.

Another instance of the two detectives joining forces is to be found in U. J. No. 688 of 16th December, 1916, which contained a story entitled "In Double Harness", by Robert Murray. In this yarn the senior partner of a firm was murdered and one of his brothers called in Sexton Blake to solve the case while the other brother brought in the equally famous criminologist from Gray's Inn Road. While Lee was prepared to withdraw, Blake was quite agreeable to work in conjunction with his friendly rival. To quote from the story,

"It was the first time in their respective careers that they had ever clashed upon the same case, that they had ever had reason to set their capabilities one against the other."

It would appear that Robert Murray was unaware of the previous story by Maxwell Scott in which the two detectives combined.

To find other examples of this detective duo one must go to *The Sexton Blake Library First series*, No. 80, "The Bathchair Mystery", this time by Andrew Murray - a story which was published in 1919. This was a seaside mystery and Blake first encountered Lee in the darkness and had a desperate fight with him until he suddenly discovered

his opponent's identity. Later, Blake was able to rescue Lee and Nipper - as well as Tinker - from an awkward predicament. All three were locked in a cold-storage room aboard a vessel.

Still another writer, F. Addington Symonds, wrote a story called "The Valley of Fear", a tale of mystery and adventure in England and Peru, in which the two detectives worked again in double harness on a case which involved a veiled queen. (Sexton Blake Library, First Series, No. 190.) The author, in addition to Nelson Lee, also introduced a galaxy of his own characters - Elspeth Drell, Mdlle. Claire Delisle and Karibel-Dhas, a criminal Arab. This tale appeared in 1921.

After this date, I do not think Nelson Lee and Nipper featured again in the Sexton Blake Saga, but it is possible there were other narratives on which I have not touched which some readers may remember. The combination of talents lent an added interest to the yarns.

* * * * *

Nelson Lee Column

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by Jim Cook

"WHAT IS GOING ON IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

Psychic phenomena rituals at St. Frank's!"

The above headlines dominate the Bannington Gazette making the local rag eagerly sought after. The current issue had a double run for the first time in its history and it is to Ezra Quirke that was responsible for the sensational scoop.

A book published by a well known London publisher deals with an episode in the history of St. Frank's when a junior was installed to pave the way for a gigantic confidence trick that would have netted the London crooks £10,000.

Ezra Quirke - and I am quoting the Bannington Gazette - a very strange young man, came to St. Frank's to create an atmosphere of Occult phenomena among the more well-to-do juniors and to lead up to a fantastic confidence trick which was to show the immediate healing of wounds from a mysterious black box.

Preparations were made to build a false wall in a cellar beneath

the East House at St. Frank's while the school was undergoing alterations and the entire school was on holiday. The trick cellar was made easy with the night watchman in the pay of the crooks.

When the school returned all was set for Quirke to induce the weaker juniors to attend spirit manifestations and devil worshipping rituals that our so-called Western world relegated years ago to the limbo of ancient mythology.

Seances were held secretly in the cellar and weird results and manifestations were created by the junior Quirke. Later, an uncle of this eerie young man, arrived to impersonate an erudite professor on the staff of the school and so the confidence trick began.

A very rich schoolboy, the hon. Douglas Singleton in the St. Frank's Fourth Form, was witness to a remarkable healing device that needed a large amount of cash, and such was the crook's method of persuasion Singleton was ready to place a large sum of money that was needed to perfect the invention.

Later, Mr. Nelson Lee intervened and the plot was exposed. It is very strange that spiritualist meetings and forms of Exorcism can be held secretly at a great public school like St. Frank's. Spirit rappings and voices were regularly demonstrated in the cellar and although only a handful of juniors were involved yet it appears many hundreds other boys at the college knew what was going on but their code of ethics preventing them from sneaking.

Where were the masters and other members of the headmaster's staff that they allowed these events to go on so long? The Bannington Gazette demands a full enquiry into this strange affair so that the public are given the full facts and assured nothing like it will happen again here."

So once again, that enigmatical and highly controversial figure, Ezra Quirke, has cast his spell on the St. Frank's scene. The Gazette may well seek the reason why such a state of affairs existed at St. Frank's when Quirke was operating, but I wonder if they know Ezra still dabbles in the Occult not very far from Bannington?

It has been established that Quirke is a follower of psychic re-search and is also an official medium. He descended to trickery and deception to gain the promise of his rascally uncle to assist his nephew

in his hobby.

But I wonder if we have actually seen the last of Quirke? Some strange force impels him to St. Frank's at intervals and he still retains many who believe in his powers.

William Napoleon Browne, who exposed him, maintains Quirke isn't a human at all but an evil spirit who visits St. Frank's for nefarious purposes.

NUMBER 13

by William Lister

I admit that if you have a touch of the Ezra Quirke's, number 13 can give you the jitters, but in this instance there is no need to panic. Number 13 merely being the issue of the "Monster" library containing "The Voyage of the Wanderer" by Edwy Searles Brooks. So take a peep at the cover illustration.

Appearing like a fairy city from the uttermost depths of the jungle, one sees many buildings, roofs and towers surrounded by a high wall. The city of the Arzac's. The lower picture depicting natives attacking a ship that appears to be on fire, and in the far distance an airship is approaching.

Edwy Searles Brooks goes to town in this South American adventure featuring the boys of St. Frank's.

Now I have a soft spot for South America. I have never been abroad, I don't really want to go, but you might tempt me if you said "South America". The early part of the journey found the St. Frank's boys sea-sick. About the only sea experience I have had is on the Fleetwood ferry - still I would risk it.

It is a giant of a land with its giant jungles and the river Amazon, and whatever happened to Col. Fawcett who vanished into the jungle so many years ago?

Whatever did happen at least it gave E.S.B. a seed-plot for his tale. He has the St. Frank's boys taking this journey into the interior to look for a certain Col. Kerrigan who had gone missing while on an expedition.

Now trust the St. Frank's crowd to see things you would not be likely to see, and to have adventures hard for you to come by.

READY! Nelson Lee, Nipper, Handforth & Co., Lord Dorrimore,

Umlosi, etc., are now on the mighty Amazon, the flaming sun shines down from a sky of deep, deep blue. Here and there a few fleecy clouds flickered in the heavens.

Everything was huge - enormous sizes - fat flies, wild animals, snakes, hidden among mighty trees and creepers. Giant lizards with five-foot neck and back spines, with awful faces, (harmless though) and the flesh good to eat. Humming birds and sloths, beautiful caterpillars that caused terrible burning pains, and also giants.

A lost city, blazing with a curious ruddy light, and mud-men!

However, customers, everything ends alright (I thought I had better tell you).

Col. Kerrigan is found. Nelson Lee stepped forward "I think you are Col. Kerrigan" he said, (Shades of Stanley and "Doctor Livingstone, I presume".)

By the way, as far as I know they never found the original Col. Fawcett.

Read and enjoy Number 13 Monster, "Voyage of the Wanderer" and keep in mind the setting is in 1926 or 1927. No doubt we would make the journey by Concorde or some such plane today.

Dear old St. Frank's boys - some people have all the fun. Still one could get lost in the vast jungles of South America, even today.

By now you may be murmuring "It sounds interesting - but where can I get a copy to read?"

There is a possibility of getting it on the Collectors' Market, and there is almost a certainty you can borrow it from the "Nelson Lee" Club Library. Ask for it by name and number and the number is 13.

* * * * *

"Recent Acquisitions include Playbox (1905), rare children's monthly, containing Mrs. Hippo in colour, on front cover, and middle pages. Children's colouring, picture story, primer, ABC, and similar books (late Victorian, and early Edwardian) mainly in colour. Boys Own Paper (1890's), Girls Own Paper (1930's), Boys Cinema, Girls Cinema (1920's, 1930's). All foregoing in original wrappers. Original newspapers from London, Leicester, Derby, Salisbury, Newcastle, Birmingham, North Wales, Kent, Norfolk, Exeter, West Country, Edinburgh, Dublin, York, (1640's to 1850's), plus proliferation of newspapers, magazines and comics right through to 1940's.

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIALNo. 204. THE BROTHERS ABUNDANT

Brothers abounded in Hamiltonia, particularly in the Magnet. Considering their number, the author rang the changes very creditably indeed. They came in all shapes and sizes, and plenty of them produced all manner of problems for their majors, their minors, their parents, their schoolmasters, and even their parents.

There were spoiled brothers; there were long-lost brothers; there were the "little child shall lead them" type brothers. They all had their niches in the saga.

But not at Rookwood. That school is notable for many peculiarities. One peculiarity - a not unwelcome one - is the absence of brothers.

Nugent Minor - the spoiled younger brother - was probably the first in the Magnet, though the delightful D'Arcy Minor had turned up very much earlier in the Gem. But Wally was a law unto himself. The harum-scarum young scamp was a thorn in the flesh of his older brother, Arthur Augustus, though Gussy's only real concern was that the youngster had inky fingers and no respect for his eldahs.

It was probably my bad taste, but I must confess that I had no great affection for the spoiled child who was also a younger brother. But maybe that is merely the schoolmaster speaking.

Nugent Minor's role in the Magnet was chiefly to cause anguish to his older brother, Frank, who, at times, seemed to take his responsibilities too seriously. Manners Minor of St. Jim's came out of the same mould. It was, possibly, a mistake on the part of the author to cast the cloak of Frank Nugent over the shoulders of Harry Manners of St. Jim's who was really a tougher character than Frank. All the same, though I never cared a lot for the theme of the erring minor, there is no question that the "His Brother's Keeper" series of 1917 was not only the best serious series in the Gem of the war years - it was one of the best of all time. The Manners parents were largely the villains of the piece, spoiling the younger son and letting the older son know only too well that the younger one came first in their affection. A fine series indeed, but a painful one.

Bulstrode's minor was of the wild and headstrong type, and the reader came to the conclusion that it was not only the good who died young. This one was tragedy and sentiment laid on with a trowel, a failing which Hamilton left behind him as time went on,

Bolsover Minor was the long-lost brother. He had been stolen by gipsies and raised in the slums of London. One can regard it as either Dickensian or corny. At the time of his brother's death, Bulstrode was captain of the Remove. As a result of the tragedy, he left Greyfriars, and Harry Wharton replaced him as Remove captain, though Bulstrode turned up again later on. Both Bulstrode and Bolsover were chopped out as dead wood many years before the Magnet ended. They weren't missed, even though Bulstrode had been a pretty sound piece of characterisation in his time.

I think it probable that plenty of people are quite unaware that Coker had a younger brother. He was the brilliant younger brother who overshadowed the older one intellectually. He turned up towards the end of 1912 in "Coker Minor - Sixth Former". It was, in fact, an extremely well-written story, with clever characterisation.

After that one appearance, Reggie Coker was seldom mentioned again, though there was an excellent pen-picture of him in the 1926 Christmas series in which Coker was kidnapped. Hamilton, of course, did not really want Reggie, apart from the fact that he provided the theme for that one remarkably good tale in 1912. In later years, Reggie was conveniently pushed under the carpet. It was easy to do this owing to the fact that Reggie spent his vacations with his parents, while Horace went to Aunt Judy and her brother, two good people who had presumably brought him up.

In 1923 we went back to the long-lost brother theme, with the series about Aubrey Angel's younger brother, Maurice. And, like the Bolsover infant of a decade earlier, the angel child had been stolen by gipsies. No wonder I was scared stiff of gipsies when I was a child. The gipsy who stole Maurice Angel seemed to be named Barengro, Hamilton's famous gipsy name, which turned up a number of times in the early Magnet and Gem.

Wingate Minor was another spoiled child, wild and weak. He motivated the Loder - Captain series of late 1925, in which Wingate

resigned the captaincy rather than expose his obnoxious young brother to the Head. For those who enjoy the long feud between Wingate and Loder and are not put off by the horrible young brother, this was one of the great series of the twenties.

In the Gem we found the "little child shall lead them" younger brother - Frank Levison. He always gave me a slight pain in the neck, and I thought the headlong reform of Ernest Levison a mistake. Nevertheless I have to admit, as I did over the Manners Minor series, that Frank Levison starred in one of the very best of the early white cover stories in the Gem. This was "The Wisdom of Gussy" in which the one and only put Frank up to pretending to be following the rocky road to ruin, and that finally brought about Levison's reformation. It was all too precipitate, but it was a fine story with excellent characterisation.

1910 was a great year for Minors. Nugent Minor turned up early in the year, and in the summer came Wun Lung's minor, followed in the autumn by Bunter Minor. Possible Frank Richards thought that if Wun Lung rang a bell, then two would ring a peal. And if one Bunter was so popular, then two Bunters might be a knockout.

A sub writer even gave Linley a minor in a tale which is notorious for its printing error and its bathos. It is better forgotten.

In passing, I always found the Gem's Mulvaney Minor very worth while, though he only featured in a few excellent comedies.

With regard to the long-lost brother themes, they were excellent of their type, especially the one about the Angels. Inevitably the Angel series was heavily burdened with contrivance, but it was beautifully written. One just suspended belief, made up the fire, snuggled down in the armchair, and enjoyed oneself.

* * * * *

London Old Boys' Book Club Library, Sexton Blake Section. Hundreds of Books available for borrowing. Please remember to order your wants for Christmas reading as early as possible to avoid disappointment in obtaining the stories you want and to beat the Christmas Postal rush (if any, this year of fiendish postal rates).

There is almost a complete run of Union Jacks from 873 to the end so just consult your catalogues and trust those you would like to read are still available. Write to:

Mrs. JOSIE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, LONDON, SE22 9HL.

BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

No. 19. THE NEW WORLD OF SOUND

Looking back at our first term as a talking cinema, I am filled with the utmost nostalgia. Our silent picture days, looked at now down the vista of the years, seem like another world entirely, but with the coming of sound one seems to be stepping into the modern sphere.

It was exciting, after scraping the bottom of the barrel of silent films for more than a year, now to be able to pick and choose of the best films to run through our new Kalee projectors, and with the aid of Western Electric, to hear them as well as see them. One talked now of sound heads, of photo-electric cells, and of exciter lamps.

I get a second-hand thrill when I look again at that first term's bookings. I would love to see them all again now. My own view is that pictures are not a patch today on what they used to be all those years ago. Nothing in the film world can compare with what it was then. Don't bother to write and tell me that I'm talking through my hat. You may be right, but I can never agree with you. "Them was the days."

Our first talking film was Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper in "The Champ". Then came Marie Dressler in "Emma", which had been intended to open the new era but "owing to technical difficulties", did not do so. These were both M. G. M. films. Next week came William Haines in "The New Adventures of Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford" (MGM), and in the same bill was Mickey Mouse in "The

Haunted House."

Next we played Buster Keaton in "The Passionate Plumber" (MGM). Keaton had made several talking films before this one (and we had played the silent versions), but this was the first time we had heard him talk. I fancy he was essentially a genius of mime, and was not a success in the talking medium. I think that "Plumber" was disappointing, but my memories of it are dim. With it we had a Hal Roach 2-reeler, the inimitable Charley Chase in "Thundering Tenors", and some other shorts with the Universal Sound News.

Then Ramon Novarro came back in "Ben Hur" with full music and sound. We had played it silent the previous term, but it went down well on its return visit.

Then, also from MGM, came Ramon Novarro again, talking and singing, in "Son of India".

Next John and Lionel Barrymore in "Arsene Lupin" (MGM), an excellent production round the personality of the fictional French detective. This week we started a new series of sound documentaries entitled "Adventures in Africa", though I have kept no record of which firm released them. Also our first Looney Tunes sound cartoon (Warner Bros.) entitled "Yodelling Yokels". We played scores of these as the years swept by.

Then Robert Montgomery and Madge Evans in "Lovers Courageous" (MGM).

Next a film that nestles snugly and delightfully in my memory. This was

James Cagney and Joan Blondell in "Larceny Lane", our first big talking picture from Warner's. It was our first Cagney (we played all his pictures for many years from now on) but I think it was Cagney's second. (His first had been a gangster film, before we had sound.) I first saw "Larceny Lane" at the Trocadero, Elephant & Castle, loved every minute of it - Cagney and Blondell were superb in it - and rang up and booked it the next morning. Cagney played a bellboy in an hotel and Blondell was a chambermaid or something of the sort. They were petty swindlers till they both landed in gaol at the end of the film.

Next, another really big 'un from MGM - Clark Gable (our first Gable film) and Wallace Beery in "Hell Divers". It just couldn't miss fire with our audiences.

Then another great thriller which I had seen at the Troc and booked the next day - Walter Huston and Chic Sale in "The Star Witness". I recall this as a kidnapping tale - it also featured a child, if I remember rightly, but cannot recall who it was. This one came from Warner's, and it held our audiences tense and enthralled.

Next, from MGM, Greta Garbo and Ramon Novarro in "Mata Hari", a spy story, based on fact.

Then, waxing more and more ambitious, we played a double-feature programme from Warner's: James Cagney and Loretta Young in "Taxi", and Winnie Lightner in "Why Change Your Husband".

Now, from MGM, our first Tarzan - Johnnie Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan

in "Tarzan the Ape Man". In the next twenty years we played many Tarzan films - with Tarzan we were always assured of packed "houses" at every performance. Everybody wanted to squeeze in. But I have never doubted that this one was the finest of the lot. It was longer, there was more sheer spectacle, and it was more on super-production lines than anything which followed. MGM did a number of Tarzans, with Weismuller and O'Sullivan, but none of the others came up to this one.

Next, from Warner's, James Cagney in "Winner Take All". Then, from MGM, Jackie Cooper and Chic Sale in "When a Fellow Needs a Friend". (That one sounds like the Gem.)

Final for the term, another double-feature programme, this time from MGM: Clark Gable in "Sporting Blood" (of which I remember nothing) and Laurel & Hardy in one of their best full-length features "Beau Chumps". These two great comedians were really out of their depth in long pictures. Their real medium was the two-reeler. But the craze for double-feature programmes in the commercial cinema was to spread and deal a smashing blow at 2-reelers of any sort.

With something like a sigh I arrive at the end of our first term with sound.

(ANOTHER ARTICLE
IN THIS SERIES
SHORTLY)

* * * * *
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The Postman Called

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

JACK COOK (Newcastle-on-Tyne): If postal charges increase any more I can only suggest that C.D. becomes a quarterly.

C. SCHOLEY (Leeds): As regular as clockwork the best 18p's worth of my monthly expenditure comes through my letter-box. I can't tell you what pleasure I derive from C.D. each month. It makes me wish I'd discovered the writings of Hamilton and Brooks much earlier in my short span of 26 years.

Miss M. HARLOW (New Milton): Even the increased postal charges, serious though they are to fixed-income people, will not cause me to cut down on C.D. or the Annual. I often think of how difficult the publication must be in these "extraordinary" times, and I do congratulate you.

PETER HANGER (Northampton): I continue to enjoy DANNY, even though he does spend too much time at the pictures. But I am surprised he hasn't even mentioned the Thomson's.

CHRIS WHITE (Newbury): A belated "thank you" for the little prayer for our animals. It is in no way "soft" - expresses sentiment but is not sentimental.

I read it to my 16 year old Collie x Labrador, "Webster". He listened with approval - closed his eyes and emitted a gentle snore - doubtless his way of expressing complete agreement!

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: A large number of readers have expressed appreciation of the Prayer for Animals which we published. Many thanks to all who wrote.)

LEN WORMULL (Romford): In a 1920 St. Frank's tale called "The Honour of St. Frank's", the author referred to Handforth & Co. as the "truculent trio". A fitting description of Handforth, of course, but I always thought his chums were around to soothe the savage breast - or beast! These were early St. Frank's days, and maybe the author hadn't made up his mind on how to mould his characters.

S. PERRY (Maidstone): I have just finished reading an old "Boys Friend Lib." called "The Golden Secret" by a Peter Kingsland. It seems a most unusual story for the "Boys Friend" in itself - but there is a short story at the back called "The Eagle of Death". In the August issue of C.D. Mr. Thurbon writes of the first "Jack, Sam & Pete" story. The story I have just read features "Jim, Buck & Rastus". I wondered if it is the same story. If so, whatever happened to "Jack, Sam & Pete"?

Thank you for all the hard work and time that you spend on "Collectors' Digest". I think the "Artists" series on the back is smashing.

MAURICE KUTNER (London): I enjoyed the article "A Return to Comic Swapping Territory" in this month's C.D.

It brought back the atmosphere and memories of days when, with boys' periodicals crammed into every available pocket, one bag of broken biscuits and another of peanuts, plus a "bunk-in" at the local cinema showing the latest Theda Bara, Charlie Chaplin or William S. Hart, life was Paradise enow! The masters at the elementary schools I attended encouraged "comic" reading and swapping. A section of the playground during "play time" resembled Petticoat Lane or the Kasbah, and all unfinished business was concluded under cover of the school desks during class.

Although the "official" reading ranged from Swiss Family Robinson to A Tale of Two Cities, the weekly boys' periodicals had the far greater "circulation" in both senses of the word, and were read for love and joy, while the Victorian classics were looked upon, like most of the school curriculum, as a not-always-welcome duty.

JOHN BECK (Lewes): I was very interested to read Norman Wright's article on the Robin Hood stories in the Thriller Comic Library which was one of the popular magazines of my youth.

As well as Robin Hood it also featured Dick Turpin at fairly regular intervals.

The artwork as Mr. Wright states was of a very high quality, with special attention to detail, something that was often lacking in the A. P.'s 'cowboy comic' published about the same time, featuring Kit Carson, Buck Jones, Davy Crockett and Kansas Kid.

I remember my school pals were very choosy when exchanging

and would reject copies with inferior illustrations. Looking through some of my copies of the Thriller comic library's to hand, I see one of the artists was D. C. Eyles, due to be featured in No. 13 of your illustrators articles. Other early ones were S. Chapman, who was probably the best, with a G. Campion (is this the same one who portrayed Bunter on T. V. I wonder) also very competent but paying all attention to background detail.

I have a feeling that the 'Thriller' was used as a testing ground or nursery for characters featured in other publications. There was Claude Duval also featured as a serial in the Comet, Kit Carson who became a monthly regular in 'Cowboy Comics' and 'Rutters Britain' a mainstay of the 'War Picture Library' and 'Air Ace'.

Who knows perhaps in a few years these magazines will be written about as regularly as the Magnet and Gem are today. I am sure there is considerable research potential for the O.B.B.C. ferrets.

* * * * *

DEATH OF Mrs. E. E. TAYLOR

We are deeply saddened to learn of the death of Mrs. Elsie Elizabeth Taylor who was a loyal and enthusiastic reader of this magazine over many years and who had been a member of our Northern Club since 1959. Her health had given cause for concern for several years past, though she was able to attend meetings regularly until fairly recently. Mrs. Taylor died of leukaemia in Bradford Royal Infirmary on 15th September, at the age of 61.

She was a delightful correspondent and a good friend. We shall miss her letters in the editorial office, and our sympathy goes out to our Northern friends who will miss her friendliness and the inspiration of her very pleasant personality.

* * * * *

WANTED: SBL's 2nd series, 690 and 697; The Gangster Film by John Baxter, Zwemmer's Editron, Nero Wolfe Tales by Rex Stout as follows: Prisoner's Base, Triple Jeopardy, Three Witnesses, Three for the Chair, The Rubber Band, The Red Box.

JOSIE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE RD., LONDON S. E. 22 9HL.

News of the Clubs

CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at 20 Wingate Way on 14th September. Members recalled their youthful heroes by watching the Robin Hood film on television.

Arrangements were made for venues for the next few meetings, and the officers of the club were re-elected for 1975-76. Items of business were discussed.

Members learned with regret that Club Founder, Danny Posner, might, for business reasons, be moving to London. Warm thanks were recorded to Danny and Mrs. Posner for their warm and generous hospitality. The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to Vic Hearn for his hospitality.

NORTHERN

Saturday, 13th September, 1975

Chairman, Geoffrey Wilde, opened the meeting by informing us that not far from our present venue the finals of the fifth Leeds International Piano Competition were taking place whilst we were here for the 305th meeting of our OBBC Literary Society. Hence, said Geoffrey, Leeds was living up to its reputation as the Athens of the north!

The first item of our programme was a tape-recording by Tom Hopperton presented by Ron Hodgson and entitled 'Alas, those chimes!'

Tom remarks on the tape that Frank Richards' success had one unfortunate effect. It was to obscure the work of other capable writers.

But, says Tom, even the genius of the writers would have been of little avail without the inherent vitality of the school story. He is answering the criticisms of some modern educationalist when he says that Frank Richards laboured in vain to establish Courtfield Council School, at which the boys would refer to 'the snobs in that big school'. Alas, says Tom, for the solidarity of the working-class - the ungrateful proletariat preferred to spend its pennies on the Magnet!

There followed a record made by Gerry Allison in which Gerry

talks about Philpott Bottles in Chips, Sebastian in Comic Cuts and Horatio Pimple in Funny Wonder.

And, to conclude our evening, a talk and reading by Jack Allison. Jack followed up Mollie's July talk on Enid Blyton by asking why this author was not liked by many teachers. And recently, he said, publicity had been given to teachers' objections to 'Peter and Jane' books.

Jack spoke about his own work in teaching backward readers. The education authority had recommended a book called 'Strike' in which the central character, Tony, goes off to a strike meeting at the docks. Another book, said Jack, tells these young people how to put bricks in lifts - this apparently considered to be a true-to-life situation in which the readers can feel at home!

But, he said, he had read to his group of readers from Enid Blyton's 'The Famous Five at the Circus' and they had been absolutely wrapped-up in it!

Jack's reading was from the Lamb series in which Mauleverer meets with Bessie Bunter on the Pegg Road, and, in one of the early air-raids of the war, the cowardly, snivelling Ponsonby clamours in vain for admittance to the Sea View air-raid shelter to the unmusical cacophany of Miss Bunter's screams!

But we have left the best wine till the last! We were delighted when Chairman, Geoffrey Wilde, announced that Hubert Gregg had consented to become President of the Northern Club in succession to P. G. Wodehouse!

'Frank Richards', says Hubert Gregg, 'is my nightly reading ... the sleep that follows is unplagued by today.'

A worthy president indeed!

LONDON

The September meeting at the Leytonstone home of Reuben and Phyllis Godsave was graced by the presence of Eric Fayne and Madam, who had travelled from their Hampshire home with Hamiltonian librarian, Roger Jenkins.

After a hearty welcome to the large gathering by Winifred Morss in the chair, it was Josie Packman who commenced the programme with an excellent paper entitled "Round the World in Eighty Years".

Lawrence Sutton followed with his threesome choice of books which were two Gems of the thirties and a Magnet of the twenties.

Eric Fayne provided an enthralling "Down You Go" competition, and it was Maurice Corkett of Sidcup who ran out the winner.

Our host, Reuben Godsave, had devised a team game, but as he had voice trouble, it was conducted by Lawrence Peters. Frank Richards centenary plates were distributed.

The 19th October meeting at the Rembrandt Hotel, Kensington, was discussed and arrangements finalised.

With sincere thanks to the host and hostess, the call-over bell rang out, and we were homeward bound.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

* * * * *

UNDERNOTED wishes to establish contact with other members in his area, and with members anywhere who are keen on illustrators of O. B. (and childrens) books, circa 1890-1940 - to exchange views, information, etc.

L. HAWKEY, 3 SEA VIEW ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA, ESSEX.

Phone 0702 79579

* * * * *

WANTED: H. Baker, Magnet, "Joker of Greyfriars", Monsters, S. O. L's, early Chums Vols., Boys' Own Annuals, Film Fun, 40's, Boys' Cinema, Film Weeklies.

JAMES GALL, 49 ANDERSON AVENUE, ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND.

* * * * *

A FAREWELL TO GREATNESS

by Les Rowley

"Pray accompany me as far as my house, my dear Quelch."

It was not a command; it was not even a request. The quiet and gentle tones in which the Head spoke made his words an invitation, and a very personal one at that, to the colleague and trusted friend who stood at his side.

Mr. Quelch nodded. A few more moments spent in the company of his respected chief were of a value now than they had ever been before. More precious than those happy occasions the two had spent together unravelling obscure passages from the classics. Time was running out and it was better not to be alone.

Together, the two made their way down Master's Corridor, through the lobby and out into the Quadrangle beyond. The high moon cast its pallid rays on Founder's statue making a spectre of the pedestalled figure. The tall trees on either side of Elm Walk stood like silent sentinels, their branches uplifted as though to claw the stars from the bejewelled sky. The beautiful avenue that had nightly known the majestic tread of the portly Prout was silent

except when the sharp breeze stirred the leaves overhead.

Time was when Prout had been likened to the "great earth-shaking beast" of Macaulay. On this June night in 1940 perhaps the good Doctor and the Remove master were wishing that the Fifth form master was still around to shake the earth of Elm Walk. But Prout was gone . . . gone a hundred miles hence and surprising enough with a commission in the Army Education Corps.

Lascelles had been the first to go and was already overseas serving with a tank regiment in the Middle East. Monsieur Charpentier had returned to his beloved France and now other masters and even some of the Sixth were restless to be off. But they would not be leaving from Greyfriars. Tonight the School lay silent and empty except for a few masters who still had packing to complete before they left on the morrow.

The fall of France had brought the enemy nearer. Daily the air above the hopfields and oast houses of the fair county of Kent, hummed with the engines of friendly and enemy aircraft and further to the East could be heard the sound of cross-Channel artillery. Earlier, the children from the towns and villages had left for the shelter and safety of other shires. Now the Greyfriars men had left and soon some would be at different schools in Devon and Somerset . . . whilst others applied themselves to new tasks in an uncertain world.

The two men, silent with their thoughts, had reached the end of the avenue of trees and the corner of the drive leading to the Head's house. As though governed by the same instinct, they halted, turned, and looked back at the school buildings bathed in moonlight. Far to the left lay the gymnasium in the lee of the tall buttressed walls of the Chapel, flanked in its turn by the large grey bulk of the House. Over all, the clock and its bell tower - the one unilluminated, the other silent.

From the ruined tower beyond the cloisters came the distant hoot of an uneasy owl. It was the Head who spoke first and there was a tiredness in his voice that betrayed some measure of the toll that the day's events had made upon him.

"I am glad that the authorities at St. Hilary's have been able to accommodate you and your form, Quelch. You will find Dr. Waverley a kindly man. He is an old friend from my Oxford days and we have managed to keep in touch through our correspondence and the occasional meeting at the Headmasters' Conference. Under your guidance I am sure that the Remove will do Greyfriars credit."

Mr. Quelch did not really need that assurance. The Remove were definitely going to do their old School credit or he, Henry Samuel Quelch, would very much want to know the reason why! But the Remove master's mind was on the more distant future.

"We shall work hard to merit your good opinion, Sir, but our thoughts will also be directed to that day when once again we assemble with the rest of Greyfriars to enjoy and profit from your wise counsel and friendly guidance. That day, I hope, will not be too long delayed."

"You are very good, my dear Quelch," in the darkness the Head's face softened, "and believe me, my dear fellow, I wish I could share in your hopes. But I fear that the struggle ahead will be a long and arduous one.

Cont'd on Page 31 . . .

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When man lets loose the hounds of war who knows when peace will come?"

"The longer the wait the greater we shall all rejoice when the time for re-assembly arrives and when I personally can serve again the chief that I have come to ..."

"That is something on which I wish to say a few words," interposed Dr. Locke gently. "When that day arrives, if indeed it does, the headmastership will have passed from my hands."

"But Dr. Locke you surely cannot be serious. To think of Greyfriars without you to guide its destinies is to ..."

"My dear friend, the time has come for me to stand down. You will remember that at the time of the Brander appointment it was suggested that I should retire. Sir Hilton's views then ..."

"Are like Sir Hilton's views now," countered Mr. Quelch warmly, "entirely his own and they are shared by nobody else. And we all know to what detriment they have proved in the past. I do adjure you, Sir, to think of the loss - the severe loss to the School. When peace comes ..."

"When peace comes, who knows what change will have taken place? No, Quelch, your solicitude touches me but my mind is made up. Now is the time when I can leave the Greyfriars stage without fuss. Now is the time to make way so that another may take my place. I give way readily to one whose name will bring a greater distinction to the School we both love. A name that will rank among the great headmasters ... a name ..."

"I can think of no such name," retorted Quelch with spirit.

"But I can, my dear Quelch. It is your own!"

For long moments there was silence.

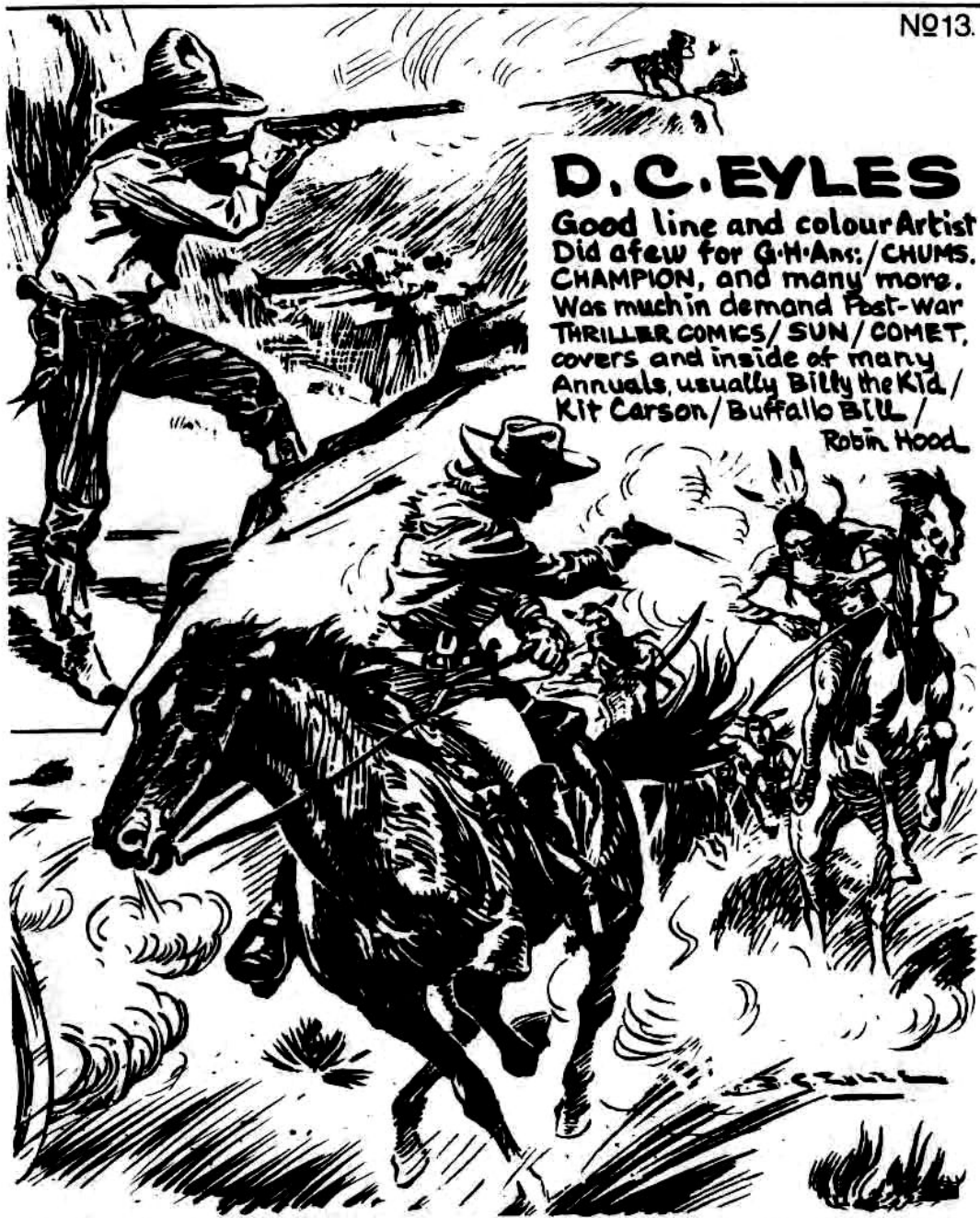
When Mr. Quelch replied it was characteristic that his first words were not about himself but about others.

"But, Dr. Locke, what of the others? Both Prout and Hacker have seniority on their side. Surely they could view with justifiable concern the appointment of a man junior to themselves ...?"

"Both Prout and Hacker have had their chance, Quelch, and history records only too well - and I gather too widely - what they made of their opportunities. Far be it from me to open old wounds and it will suffice to say that never can such history be allowed to repeat itself. No, my dear friend, it is your own name that must go before the Board of Governors. In fact, I have already sounded out the views of Colonel Wharton and Major Cherry and have found them in whole-hearted agreement with ..."

"You are most kind, Sir, and I need hardly say how much I esteem your good opinion. But I do entreat you to reconsider your own position. When Greyfriars reassembles the School will be in great need of the experience that only you possess. Besides, I find that this is a matter that should be given time for thought ..."

THIS ARTICLE WILL BE CONTINUED IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE



D. C. EYLES

Good line and colour Artist
 Did a few for G.M.Ans./CHUMS.
 CHAMPION, and many more.
 Was much in demand Post-war
 THRILLER COMICS/ SUN/ COMET.
 covers and inside of many
 Annuals, usually Billy the Kid/
 Kit Carson/ Buffalo BILL /
 Robin Hood