

STORY PAPER  
**COLLECTORS DIGEST**

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JANUARY 1977

**A GENUINE MAGAZINE FOR ONE PENNY!**



**THE PAPER EVERY BOY CAN SHOW HIS PARENTS.**

No. 6, Vol. 1.

Week ending June 15, 1915.

24 pages, One Penny.



The school porter advanced with another parcel of pocket hats, but the boys, already well-stamped, all turned for the school, and a few great of fare broke out amongst the angry boys. By noon, as it was going to stand still, round the corner to the school.

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# STORY PAPER

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# COLLECTORS DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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Founded in 1946 by  
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## CHRISTIE MYSTRIE!

At the peak of her career, Agatha Christie gave us some mystery stories which, like those of the peerless Sherlock Holmes, will surely live for ever. There were, however, one or two real-life mysteries in the career of the famous writer herself. One of those mysteries is why a number of her short stories can only be obtained today in collections of her short stories published in America, and why three of those short stories, which were later extended into full-length novels, are not obtainable in Britain but can be bought in the States.

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"The Mystery of the Plymouth Express" was extended into "The Mystery of the Blue Train", published in 1928 and starring Poirot. "The Love Detectives", a Mr. Quin short story, was extended into "Murder at the Vicarage", featuring Miss Marple and published in 1930. (The curious thing about this one was that the selection known under the title of "The Mysterious Mr. Quin" was also published in 1930, though "Love Detectives" was not in it.)

Finally, "The Case of the Caretaker", a Miss Marple short, was extended into "Endless Night", which featured none of the Christie regulars, and was published in 1967.

The shorts were published in very early days and may have been available in early anthologies in this country. If so, I have never come across them, but I did not start reading Christie till the late thirties. One can understand that short stories, which were expanded, should be withdrawn, but it is odd, if that happened, that they were not also withdrawn in the States. And it is certainly curious that the Miss Marple short was not expanded till more than thirty years later when it became "Endless Night".

When "Endless Night" was filmed, they gave it an "X" certificate. Fancy a Christie, as an "X" film. It shows you how the minds of film producers work.

#### IT'S GREEK TO ME!

In that remarkable piece of research work, the Charles Hamilton Tag-List, which we reprinted in the Annual, the late Tom Hopperton made this comment: "Greek finds small place. This seems rather odd, when the 'Iliad' (quoted in Pope's translation) crops up continually, although the 'Odyssey' is hardly mentioned. All the foregatherings of the Head and Quelch to discuss Sophocles only give us the odd familiar word."

Hundreds and hundreds of quotations, especially Latin, feature in the Hamilton writings down the years - but no Greek.

His library had a most impressive array of Latin authors, but no Greek texts so far as we are aware. An old classics mistress used to call on Hamilton in later years and they used to read Latin together, but she never made any mention of Greek.

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The inevitable conclusion is that Hamilton was not a Greek scholar, and he never claimed to be one. The message in Greek on the cigarette case in the Cigarette Case Christmas series (appraised so skillfully in an article by Roger Jenkins a year ago in C.D.) supports the idea that Hamilton never got beyond the Greek alphabet which he taught himself when young.

Yet one of the slight pieces of evidence offered to try to prove that Hamilton attended a Thorn House School in Ealing is that he was taught Greek there by a teacher of Modern Languages. In the past fifteen months or so quite a number of writers of articles in books and papers have copied and repeated that old piece of guesswork about Hamilton attending "Thorn House School", and have written it down as though it were a fact. So legends are perpetuated.

A month or two ago Charles Hamilton's niece, in a letter to a national newspaper, wrote: "There is not a shred of evidence that Charles attended Thorn House School, Ealing, but some people seem to take pleasure in believing he went there."

According to the biography on Hamilton published in 1975, the details of the school are advertised in a contemporary directory of private schools, and Dr. G. Von Cronenthal was the teacher of Modern Languages there. It is alleged that Stanton Hope asked Hamilton to translate a letter, written in Classical Greek, which Hope had received from a Greek publisher. It is further alleged that Hamilton was congratulated on his speed in translation, and replied "My old language teacher, Doctor Von Cronenthal, would have been pleased to hear that."

I must confess that I find it unconvincing.

In the first place, Classical Greek is not a Modern Language. Secondly, it seems highly unlikely that a Greek publisher would write in Classical Greek, any more than a modern Italian publisher would write in Latin. Thirdly, would Hope have remembered the name of Hamilton's language teacher, mentioned casually in a conversation of that sort in those early days? If I told you the name of my language master today I am sure you would have forgotten it in a day or two.

And, most important of all, perhaps, those of us who knew Hamilton the best agree that he was no Greek scholar.

# DANNY'S DIARY

JANUARY 1927

At the end of the month there has been a simply terrific gale blowing all over the country. It reached 102 miles an hour in places. Many lives have been lost and much damage has been done.

The Nelson Lee Library opened with "Handforth's Ghost Hunt" and the Christmas holiday at Handforth Towers continued - with a skeleton, hidden treasure, and a ghost. Handforth made up his mind to get to the bottom of the mysteries, and there is loads of fun and festive thrills.

Then came the start of a new adventure series, the opening tale being "The Knights of Northestria". Lord Dorrimore springs a surprise on the holiday party at Handforth Towers when he invites them, and Nelson Lee, to go with him on a trip to the North Pole. They go on an airship named the "Titan", but disaster strikes and they land in a strange country peopled by knights in armour. They felt as though they had been transported to medieval times, but, according to the artist, the St. Frank's boys were still wearing their school etons.

Next week, in "Handforth the Bold", Handy finds himself in trouble in the wonderful land - and there is plenty of danger for everybody. But Princess Mercia wins all their hearts.

But in "The Schoolboy Knight-Errants", the fierce invaders, the Gothlanders, hold prince Oswy as hostage, and the St. Frank's boys set off to rescue him. They penetrate deep into Gothland, and face the treacherous Kassker. And they turn the tables on him, too. Handforth still manages to be very funny amid all the perils and excitement. Final of the month is "Kassker's Armada", a thrilling story of the invasion of Northestria by Kassker the Grim. Nelson Lee takes over the command of the Northestrians, and the invaders get a warm reception. This unusual series continues next month.

In his chat, Mr. E. S. Brooks says that readers are complaining about Nipper becoming Dick Hamilton, so he is to be Nipper again. A good job, too.

The month's new story in the Monster Library is "The Boy Who

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Vanished", and it is good. One of the early St. Frank's series, I think.

There was a bad influenza epidemic in the country this month, and there were 326 deaths from influenza in London in the one week ending 15th January.

A wireless telephonic service has now been started between London and New York. Wonderful times we live in!

A grand new series has been running all through January in the Magnet. On a train, Billy Bunter first comes across "The Game Kid", a plucky youngster who earns his living by boxing in Bobby Huggins's ring. Later, Dr. Locke is on his way to visit Wharton Lodge when he is attacked by a gang of thieves in the lane. The Head is saved from injury by Dury, the Game Kid, and eventually the Head arranges for Dury to go to Greyfriars where he enters the Remove.

In the second story, "The Bruiser of the Remove", Dury's pugilistic ways and his conceit do not make him popular with his form-fellows, and, though he can take care of himself, he is not very happy. In "Bound by Honour", he becomes friendly with Cedric Hilton of the Fifth, and Hilton becomes his idol. In "The Game Kid's Temptation", he is very much under the influence of Hilton, and seems to be heading for expulsion. Dury had promised the Head that he will not box again professionally, but in the last story of the month "Loyal to the Last", still under the Fifth-former's evil influences, he arranges to fight the Banbury Pet. But Hilton bets against Dury, and asks him to lose the fight. But the Kid fights to win, and does win - and his lofty friend Hilton turns against him.

This fine series continues next month. It reminds me of the series about Oliver Lynn in the Gem some time ago, and it is every bit as good.

On 22nd January the curtain fell for the last time at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, in London. The theatre is to be pulled down and a luxury cinema built in its place.

The Gem opened the year with a 3-story series in which Knox Minor came to St. Jim's. He is a good footballer and a good boxer and he sets himself up against Tom Merry. He becomes junior captain in Tom Merry's place, and I don't think that a new boy would have been captain like that in so short a time. Finally Knox and Tom Merry save

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Ginger Burke who has fallen through the ice, and they become friends until, happily enough, Knox leaves St. Jim's. The titles of the three tales: "Out for Trouble", "Tom Merry's Enemy", and "Captain & Cad". They are not by the real Martin Clifford.

But with the next series, we have the real Martin back with a Talbot series. In the opening story "The Black Sheep of St. Jim's", Crooke turns for help to his cousin, Talbot. But Crooke is so desperate that he steals a lot of money. Last tale of the month is "Standing by a Scapegrace" in which Talbot decides to take his cousin's burden on his own shoulders. A good dramatic series which continues next month.

In the Schoolboys' Own Library there has been "The Scapegrace of the School", an early Greyfriars story in which Langley plots against Harry Wharton but he is found out and expelled at the end. A good yarn. I did not buy the other Schoolboys' Own Library "The Devices of Dickie Dexter" as I do not care much for the St. Katie's stories by Michael Poole.

The pictures I have seen this month at the cinemas have been: Reginald Denny and Laura La Plante in "Skinner's Dress Suit" (makes you think of Greyfriars); Ricardo Cortez and Greta Garbo in "Torrent"; Marion Davies and Antonio Moreno in "Beverley of Graustark"; John Barrymore and Dolores Costello in "The Sea Beast"; Betty Compson and Wallace Beery in "The Pony Express"; and Douglas Fairbanks in "The Black Pirate".

EDITORIAL COMMENT: S.O.L. No. 43 comprised the Christmas Double Number for 1908 "The Greyfriars Victory" plus the normal length tale of three weeks later - the last Magnet of 1908 - entitled "Expelled". Though the first story was a Christmas Double, it was not a Christmas story, but centred on amateur theatricals. The one expelled was Levison, with his name changed to Langley in the reprint, while Carbery of the original was changed to Loder. Interesting S.O.L., though making a slightly unbalanced whole. As the main interest of the S.O.L. was that it presented "early adventures", the changing of names and the updating seemed a little pointless and, possibly, regrettable.)

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WANTED to complete runs: Gems 1181, 1182; Magnet 1658, Boys' Friend 2nd Series 451; Lees Old Series: 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 144, 145; 2nd New Series 151 (10/12/32). Old Series Lees, Magnets, Gems for exchange.

MCPHERSON, 1 ST. JOHN ST., WELLS, SOMERSET 72038.

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# Nelson Lee Column

BROOKS AND HAMILTON

by N. Gayle

One cannot be involved in the Old Boys' Book world without noticing a certain occasional animosity between admirers of Hamilton's writing and that of E. S. Brooks. It is sometimes friendly, and unhappily sometimes in earnest - and yet either way it is destructive, at least in the sense of focusing more world-wide attention upon the two greatest school story writers of all time. Nelson Lee and Magnet readers should know better than anyone else the truth in the old maxims 'united we stand - divided we fall'.

In truth, the artists were two very different kinds of writers - and people. Chronologically Hamilton came first, and his genius flowered first - and Brooks, like the true artist he was, learnt some of the craftsman's trade from him in schoolboy story writing. The great pupil learning from the great master, as it were. This is not a slur on Brooks - all true originality in art is initially founded on the distillation of experience of the masters. Just as Beethoven learnt from Mozart, in fact. And just as Beethoven matured and his creative genius took him to new and different heights, so did that of Brooks. Of course, school story writing cannot be truly compared in the same artistic terms as the creation of music, but the parallel still holds true, for the two pairs of men were top in their respective fields of art. And Brooks was so very different from Hamilton. In great Hamilton, the story line so often seems to emerge in beautiful simplicity from subtle and magnificent characterisations, from the interaction of personalities that we have come to know better than our own. Brooks wrote from a different angle - he was first and foremost a fine thriller author, master of the 'double plot', and his magnificent characterisations tended to grow out of one plot, rather than the reverse - giving us the best of both worlds. It is a tribute to Brooks that, as essentially a thriller writer, the plot had to come first, but his characterisations became in some cases so fine, that he achieves an equal balance between plot and character, at least in the great series of the Nelson Lee Library.

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And so I would say it is futile to argue over who was the greater of the two school story writers. After all, who would have the effrontery to say that Beethoven was a better composer than Mozart, or vice versa? ... At any top of the scale in an art form, however lowly that art may be, comparisons such as this are worse than useless - they are devious and dangerous. On the one hand we have the wonderful COURTFIELD CRACKSMAN series by Hamilton: on the other, the EZRA QUIRKE series by Brooks. They are poles apart, and the world is richer for that difference. We should be grateful for it.

NIPPER

by Chas. Churchill

Re the Editorial regarding the popularity of Tinker and Nipper, I feel that for Nipper a lot would depend on whether the reader liked stories written in the first person or not. Personally, I like stories written in this way as I think it makes one feel as if one is actually participating in the events and that the characters are friends or foes as the case may be.

A very well known "Leeite" once told me he thought Nipper was a stuck-up prig or words to that effect. If he did not like stories in the first person he would feel like that, no doubt, as Nipper appeared to boast. The fact was that Nipper had had so much wider experience as Lee's assistant (prior to St. Frank's) than the other boys and therefore knew so much more of life. He was therefore able to guide them and correct them in many ways and this would appear to be "bigheadedness" if it was written in the first person.

When the style of the stories was altered Nipper seemed to be quite a different person, apart from having been given a name, which always jarred on me, having been "brought up" on the first person stories.

Considering all these points I feel that Nipper would be very popular with readers like myself who had the Nelson Lee in the old days and liked first person stories while he might not be so popular with those who commenced reading the N. L. after the transformation to Dick Hamilton. Furthermore, about this time, he became a less major figure in the stories owing to the pushing forward of Handforth, by whose instigation I don't think we really know.

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The C. D. Annual arrived yesterday quite safely. I don't think I ever received it so early as this since I came to New Zealand. I have only glanced at its contents so far. But I did read Bob Blythe's contribution with the result I am writing this to get to you as soon as possible for a strange echo has occurred arising from that contribution.

I have Edwy Brooks' original first instalment in his own long-hand of "AMONG THE SOLAR PLANETS" written in an old Exercise book and it is very likely this was part of the parcel that was 'lost' in transit from the editor of CHUMS to Mr. Brooks.

It is a very far cry from that time in 1910 to the present time. For 66 years ago a MS was posted in London to Mr. Brooks and somehow it lost itself in the post but was picked up by a stranger in Fleet Street and sent on to Edwy.

And I have part of that very MS! That it should end up here in New Zealand is in itself remarkable, but stranger still is that it has survived all these years to look upon a very different world to the calm and sedate year of 1910!

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#### DEATH OF CLIFF HOUSE ARTIST

It is with sorrow that I have to record the death of Tommy Laidler who died in January 1975 aged 82. Born at Windsor in 1893, this clever artist took over from the talented G. M. Dodshon of School Friend fame, and drew the fine illustrations in the revived Cliff House and Bessie Bunter stories in the Schoolgirl in the thirties. He also drew for several boys papers including Chums, when his style was similar to Thomas Henry of 'William' fame.

It had been my intention to contact Laidler for some years, but other research had delayed my efforts to trace him. It was galling to discover, and too late, that he lived at Taplow in Berks., not far from my brother, whom I visit quite often. And so another of our old artists, has left us, and one who gave tremendous pleasure to generations of girl readers. Tommy Laidler will always be fondly remembered.

W. O. G. LOFTS

# BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

A full programme for January 1977 means another short comment from myself. I hope you all enjoyed a Happy Christmas with lots of good things to read, and wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year. My thanks to everyone for their good wishes.

JOSIE PACKMAN

## FURTHER MYSTERIES OF THE DETECTIVE WEEKLY

by Josie Packman

It has been brought to my notice that during the period of the Detective Weekly when no Sexton Blake tales appeared, there were a number of short stories featuring a detective called Marcus Max. These tales have now been traced as being Sexton Blake ones, originally published in the Penny Pictorial circa 1912.

Our very good friend and contributor to Blakiana, Mr. Cyril Rowe, has confirmed this but as he is preparing a fuller article on the subject I will not enlarge on it myself, except to say that it was another despicable thing for the Editor to have done, especially as all these tales were advertised as new ones. The same thing as was done to the reprints from 251 onwards. I am now checking the main stories in the non-Blake Detective Weekly as so many of them are familiar. At a guess I should say that the ones written by Blake authors are re-writes of Union Jack or S.B.L. tales. More details about this aspect of the Mysteries of the Detective Weekly will appear later.

## "THE CASE OF THE MISSING UNION JACKS"

by John Bush

I have read many times in the columns of Collectors' Digest, of collectors who have been fortunate in coming across, many copies of Magnets, Gems, etc., in someone's attic, or old junk shop. But the occurrence I am about to relate is quite true, and happened a few years ago when I was living at Chislehurst, Kent, and is quite the reverse of a treasure trove.

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I was out shopping with the wife, one Saturday afternoon, when passing my local newsagent, I saw a board outside his shop which said UNION JACKS FOR SALE 1d and 2d each. With a look of amazement, I turned to the wife and said "What a find, they must be old copies, that he has had for years and is now getting rid of them." I then rushed in to the shop, and said, "have you still got any of the Union Jacks left?" "Yes" was the reply, "I think I still have about two boxes left, they are going quick". I said "I should think so, I will have all the remainder, could I see them." "With pleasure" was the reply. And out came two boxes, which contained a large assortment of Union Jack FLAGS. I was so overcome with surprise and disappointment that I could only

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blurt out "I don't want any of those they are not UNION JACKS" and rushed out of the shop. He must have thought that he was dealing with a maniac.

Outside the shop, the wife said to me "Did you get them all?" "No" I said, "they were only flags". We looked at each other, and roared with laughter. I still did not quite understand, until she explained to me, that the Queen was attending a function in the town, the following week. When my Library "Union Jacks" arrive from Josie, the wife still says "Do you remember when ..." and I can still laugh over THE MISSING UNION JACKS.

### SECRETS FOR SALE

by Don Harkness

Any criticism of a story or an author is of necessity a purely personal one and open to discussion or dissent.

S. Malcolm Hincks was a writer who, to me, wrote stories that were just average and not always terribly exciting. In "Last of the Lynns", U.J. 1411, for instance Sexton Blake never entered the story until it was half over, somehow giving the impression that the detective was only brought into the story so it could qualify as a Blake yarn.

On the other hand, in "Secrets for Sale" which Hincks wrote for U.J. 1441 dated 30 May, 1931, he gave us a story which would not have disgraced Robert Murray or G. H. Teed, and kept the reader guessing right up until the final chapter.

Let me quote the editor's preface to the story. "Avril Swaine had delivered the letter to the hotel simply as a pretext for seeing luxury and wealth at close quarters. She did not expect murder or a maze of mystery that would entangle her in a complex coil of circumstances and drag her dizzily from one strange adventure to another."

Of course there was something else that caused her to decide to deliver that letter. As secretary to a firm of solicitors, she was used to having dull, uninteresting legal documents to type, but when she took down a dictated letter to a man who was warned that his life was in peril, she was determined to see how a man took the threat of death, as well as wishing to see the interior of the luxurious Hotel Majestic. She saw precious little of the luxury hotel as the flat she wanted was a service

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flat on the roof and entered by another way as she soon found out. Finding the flat she is at first confronted by a man armed with a revolver, then discovers the body of a murdered man, and is finally helped to escape via the goods lift by a "grey-eyed stranger with a strong lean firm jaw" - Sexton Blake himself. From then on there are kidnappings, escapes and other strange happenings until all the mysterious events are cleared up. All in all, a very good mystery story and a credit to Mr. Hincks,

(P.S. The Union Jack is available from the Sexton Blake lending Library. J.P.)

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 139 - Magnet No. 973 - "Asking for Trouble"

Wharton's attitude to Peter Hazeldene was of course affected by his special regard for Marjorie, and this triangular situation was a mirror image of the Courtney, Valence, and Vi Valence relationship that had existed in the Sixth Form in red Magnet days. The hero tolerated and assisted the weak brother because of his regard for the sister. There is no doubt that such a situation is much more credible in the Sixth Form, but even at the Remove level there are undeniably many fine stories dealing with Wharton's relationships with the Hazeldenes. "Asking for Trouble" is a typical example of the way in which Charles Hamilton used this perennial theme.

Angel was laying bets on the Fourth Form to win a football match against the Remove, and he did not intend to lose. He publicised his bet with Vernon-Smith knowing that the Bounder would, as a result, lose his place in the Remove side, and he encouraged Hazeldene to accompany him to the Cross Keys where Hazel lost a considerable sum to Banks. In a fit of petty irritation Hazel told Wharton he would just as soon give up his team position (as goalkeeper), but Marjorie was persuading Wharton to play her brother, while Angel was promising to keep Banks at bay if Hazel deliberately allowed the Fourth to score in the match.

Charles Hamilton portrayed Hazeldene in a most unflattering light. He was restive and sulky because Squiff was a better goalkeeper than he was, and "like most weak fellows, Hazel was extremely

sensitive about being what he called 'dictated to'. He was liable to display an offensive independence at the most awkward moment." Crumpling up when disaster threatened, and showing resentment at being under an obligation, Hazeldene was so clearly presented to the reader that he became the epitome of the weak shiftless borrower who bore a grudge against those who helped him. It all provided a startling insight into the unexpected vagaries of human nature and was a striking proof of the author's ability to draw vivid pen-portraits of human foibles.

The story was published in October 1926, when the Rookwood saga had ended and Charles Hamilton was switching his attention to the Magnet. It was a complicated but strangely satisfying story in its twists and turns, and was a good augury for the splendours and magnificence that was yet to come.

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LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 212. THE CHICKEN AND THE GAME KID

Danny, in the instalment of his Diary which we publish this month, reminds us that it is exactly fifty years since the Game Kid series was appearing in the Magnet. Danny, naturally enough, was reminded of the Schoolboy Pug series in the Gem, and he came to the conclusion that it was every bit as good. He may well have been right.

The Schoolboy Pug series featured in the Gem early in 1923. The Game Kid series entranced readers of the Magnet early in 1927.

The Magnet series was longer. It ran for six weeks, while the Gem series ran for five weeks. And the Gem tales, in 1923, were all on the short side, with too large a supporting programme. That is no reason, though, for claiming that the Game Kid series was the better of the two. Mere length is no criterion of quality.

The Magnet's series was more contrived. The Game Kid went to Greyfriars because he rescued Dr. Locke when the Head was attacked by thieves on his way to Wharton Lodge, and the Head rewarded a boy, who was anxious to be educated, by putting him into the Remove at Greyfriars.

Oliver Lynn was the cousin of St. Leger of the Fifth Form at

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St. Jim's. When Lynn's shiftless father died, St. Leger's father, Lynn's uncle, sent Lynn to St. Jim's. Both Lynn of the St. Jim's series and Dury of the Greyfriars series were boys who boxed professionally in the Ring. Both were rough diamonds.

St. Leger was ashamed of his cousin, and tried to keep the relationship secret, while there was a family understanding that Lynn's career as a boy boxer should not be disclosed to anyone at his school, St. Leger, the good-natured but weak Fifth Former, prevented Blake & Co. from going to Abbotsford to see the Chicken in a fight. But he had not foreseen that the Terrible Three would visit a cinema where the Chicken's fight featured in a news reel. However, the Terrible Three did not at once disclose what they had accidentally discovered.

As for Dury, when he went to Greyfriars, he promised his benefactor, the Headmaster, that he would not appear professionally as a boxer while he belonged to Greyfriars.

Lynn worshipped his cousin, St. Leger, and the weak St. Leger took advantage of that affection. In the same way, Dury conceived a great admiration for Hilton, the Greyfriars Fifth Form equivalent of the shallow, St. Leger of St. Jim's. Here was one weakness of the Greyfriars story. Making Dury idolise Hilton of the Fifth made the series too much of a facsimile of the St. Jim's plot. The author, I feel, would have been wiser to make someone else the object of Dury's affection.

Both Lynn and Dury spoke badly and had shocking table-manners, but, for me, the St. Jim's version of the result rang the truer.

It was not only the black sheep of St. Jim's who despised Lynn. He was put into study No. 6, and it was Blake, Digby, Herries and even the kind-hearted Gussy who were intolerant of the new boy. It was completely natural. They were revolted by the new boy, and could not help showing it. One criticism of the school tales we loved was that all the virtues were usually shown as the prerogative of the good lads while all the vices were the prerogative of the "cads". It is not so in real life - and it was not so in the Schoolboy Pug series.

Martin Clifford showed Lynn as a contemptible bully in the face of the growing scorn of his study-mates, but he made Lynn as a pathetic character who touched our heart-strings. Tom Merry, seeing that the

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Study No. 6 quartette were being bullied by their new study-mate, against whom they were, unknowingly, at a great disadvantage, spilled the beans about Lynn's career as a boy prizefighter in the ring.

The Greyfriars version was slightly more hackneyed. Billy Bunter, in a railway compartment (travelling third-class for once) saw Lynn and his manager, Mr. Huggins, and overheard their conversation concerning the prizefighting.

The St. Jim's story, too, had the advantage of the presence of the thoughtless, whimsical Cardew, who amused himself by making the unfortunate Lynn believe that he had found a friend in the smooth-speaking Ralph Reckness who did not bother about the harm he was doing. And when Lynn found out the truth we had drama which placed the Schoolboy Pug series in the top rank of school stories,

Dury, of course, had similar experiences at Greyfriars, and Danny is recalling them in his Diary.

Were a vote to be taken, I am sure that the Magnet series would win hands down, but that is only because the Magnet has so many more loyal fans than the Gem. For me, the Oliver Lynn story was superior, though I think the Game Kid series was magnificent.

With the Schoolboy Pug in the Gem, Hamilton really started off on the long and varied career of character writing which was soon to be transferred to the Magnet and would continue for more than a decade, and which would earn him an acclaim which has never faded among the people who really know his work as it has to be known if one is to do him credit.

At the end of the Lynn series, the Schoolboy Pug returned to Hawley's ring, to his own form of happiness. He had sacrificed himself for his cousin, St. Leger, and, in a quite moving final chapter, he wrote a letter to his cousin to thank him for all his kindness. So the series ended with a sigh.

Tom Merry wondered whether St. Jim's would ever see Lynn again, and Martin Clifford observed that only time would tell.

So the way was left open for another Lynn series. Luckily, with memories of Outram and Valentine, who went back for sequels, it never materialised. The Chicken had his little hour, and, four years later, the Game Kid had his. Both are unforgettable for those who read

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the magnificent series in their respective papers, and it is quite immaterial whether one was any better than the other. Possibly each, in its way, could not have been bettered.

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## BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

### No. 34. THE SUPERB WILL HAY

We were booking less programmes now. In our earlier years as a school cinema we had booked two programmes almost every week of term, on Fridays and Sundays. Now, however, it was mainly one programme per week, with performances on Sundays and Mondays. Occasionally, we would put on the extra show - during Cricket Week, for instance. And where the double-feature programme had been very much the exception, for some years to come it was to be a regular thing.

This meant that for some years we would be playing more features and less shorts. The reduced number of programmes in a term was probably due to the amount of time which they took to prepare, to run the shows, and then to send off the films after we had finished with them. And even a schoolmaster's day only has 24 hours.

Our opening show of the term was a double-feature bill, both from Warner's, comprising Kay Francis in "First Lady" and Ronald Reagan in "Accidents Will Happen". This was, I think, our first Ronald Reagan film. In recent times one has read in the papers about Reagan being a dud actor in "B" films, but that was probably just a political sneer. We played plenty of Reagan films, and they were always very popular with our young audiences. And certainly such Reagan films as "King's

Row" stood well up to comparison with the best.

Next came The Dead End Kids in "Crime School", a fine drama in its day, from Warner's.

Now a double-feature programme from G. F. D.: Will Hay in "Oh! Mr. Porter" plus Jack Holt in "Crash Donovan". I daresay that Mr. Porter was Will Hay's most popular film, at any rate among the mere males who love railways and steam engines. We had played several earlier Hay films.

Next a double bill, both from Warner's: The Mauch Twins in "Penrod's Double Trouble" plus Kay Francis in "My Bill".

Then a double bill from G. F. D.: Jack Buchanan in "Smash and Grab" plus John Wayne in "The Sea Spoilers".

Followed by Edward G. Robinson in "The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse", from Warner Bros.

Next a double bill from Warner's: Rudy Vallee in "The Gay Imposters", a lively Musical, plus Wayne Morris in "Men Are Such Fools".

This was followed by a double-feature programme, both from G. F. D.: Deanna Durbin in "Mad About Music" plus Ricardo Cortez in "Postal Inspector". The few Deanna Durbin films were

charming, and "Mad About Music" was no exception. Unhappily, she abandoned her film career while still very young.

The following week, Will Hay was back in "Hey! Hey! U. S. A.," which had its moments, though it was not among the very best of Hay, so far as I remember. Supported by James Dunn in "Mysterious Crossing". Both films released by G. F. D.

Next, from A. B. F. D., George Formby in "I See Ice", a curious title,

with a story-line concerning ice-skating, I fancy. It was not quite so good as the earlier Formby films, so far as I remember, and, oddly enough for a Formby film, it had an "A" certificate. I can't recall why. But an "A" certificate was a handicap for a film produced for family audiences, with a star very popular with the youngsters.

Final programme for the term, another double show, both films from Warner Bros.: Humphrey Bogart and George Brent in "Racket Busters" plus Ronald Reagan in "Sergeant Murphy".

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REGINALD TALBOT'S BROTHER

by W. O. G. Lofts

Charles Hamilton and Edgar Wallace had much in common. Both were kind-hearted men having a weakness for gambling and were born losers. Most important, both were extremely prolific writers. Indeed, their output was so vast especially in their early days, that stories written by them are still being discovered by researchers. Personally I get a thrill at finding something new, and it would be a very dull hobby if everything was known and recorded about these two popular authors.

To give a classical example of the output of Edgar Wallace, since his Bibliography was published in 1969, if it were to be republished it would be almost double in size with fresh information gleaned since that date. Concerning Charles Hamilton, it is a fact that still a lot has to be discovered about his writings prior to writing for the Gem and Magnet - excepting of course his Trapps Holmes and early Amalgamated Press material. From 1895 until 1902 there is especially a big gap though it is known in the early days of writing he concentrated on adult fiction more than juvenile.

A recent discovery in an A. P. comic paper I found of more than usual interest. Readers of THE FRANK RICHARDS AUTOBIOGRAPHY may recall an early chapter, where the first Magnet/Gem editor Percy Griffith chided our favourite author. This was because he had noticed a story by him in The Jester - a comic in a rival department group. A researcher many years ago claimed to have perused all the files of The

Jester, and found nothing resembling Charles Hamilton's work, and it was thought that perhaps the wrong paper was named by our author. However as is usually the case, whilst perusing *The Jester* for something else, I came across this story in 1907 entitled "The Man Who Shot the Constable" and written under his real name of Charles Hamilton.

What was most interesting about this tale, is that it features a crook named Paul Talbot, and a detective of the name of Arthur Redfern. This Talbot is dark-haired, good-looking and respected in Society, but by night is a master criminal nicknamed 'The Dandy' by the police. The story can only be described as melodrama, and for *The Jester* when it catered for the adult field more than juvenile. Paul's younger sister Mella falls in love with the detective Redfern, she not knowing her brother is a criminal, and Redfern likewise. Talbot eventually being chased by Redfern shoots a constable, and rather than face dishonour shoots himself. Redfern keeps the secret from Mella whom he marries when she gets over her grief.

It seems more than likely that 'Martin Clifford' in 1914, remembered this old story when finding a new character for the Gem, Reginald Talbot the dark haired good looking leader of a gang of crooks, later nicknamed 'The Toff' and who won the King's pardon, was one of the most popular characters ever to appear at St. Jim's, and there is more than an off-chance that his much older brother was *The Man Who Shot The Constable*.

Note: Arthur Redfern was a leading character at one of Charles Hamilton's other schools. Possibly St. Dorothy's (St. Dolly's) in *The Boys' Realm* in 1909.

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## The Postman Called

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

Mrs. J. PACKMAN (East Dulwich): First of all let me congratulate you on a superb double number of C. D.

I note your remarks in *Small Cinema* re two old timers - Patsy Kelly and Frederic March. Stars of the first water. I have seen

Patsy Kelly in many small parts in the films shown on TV of recent years. The latest was as a witch in Rosemary's Baby which I saw last night on B. B. C. 1, a small part but excellently acted. As for the film Anthony Adverse, I remember it well. A lovely period drama with excellent work from the star Frederic March and our old friend Edmund Gwenn. There is a handsome picture of Mr. March in the part of Anthony Adverse in one of my film books. From the style of costume the period would be early 19th century around the time of Waterloo. Hervey Allen commenced writing the novel in 1926 and published it in 1933, the film being produced in 1936. I can well remember seeing it and then waiting weeks for a reservation copy of the book from my local Public Library. I must see if it is still available and re-read it. I wish we could see the film again on TV. I do not care much for these modern actors like Paul Newman and Robert Redford. No style about them, only violence. Give me Frederic March and Humphrey Bogart any day. Many thanks for reminding me of those wonderful days.

PAT CREIGHAN (Monaghan): You've done it! As Frank Richards would say: - "There can be no doubt, no possible shadow of doubt - that the Pearl Jubilee issue of the Digest is absolute tops? In quantity and quality it cannot be surpassed. Words fail to really express my delight."

I think one could describe this issue as a mini-Annual. There is something for everyone in the array of articles and writers represented.

If the Jubilee issue of the Annual comes even near the standard of this month's "C.D." we are surely in for a merry Christmas!

Thank God for the "C.D." and Annual. They are our haven in this mad tortured world. We can forget our troubles and re-live our youth.

RICHARD DALBY (London): (in a gorgeous Greetings Telegram) Accept my heartiest congratulations on the 30th Anniversary of C.D. Keep up the excellent work. My warmest regards to you. Till we meet one day. God bless you.

LESLIE ROWLEY (Truro): A letter to say "thank you" for all the effort you have put into the Pearl Double Number of C.D. Anyone lucky enough to possess a copy will cling on to it like grim death for there is no doubt

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it will become a collector's item in a very short space of time. I've browsed through those sixty pages not once but several times, and will, no doubt, repeat the performance before putting the magazine to rest. Thank you, again.

R. J. LEWIS (Neston): It was interesting to learn, from Mr. Fellows article, that a minimum reading age of 13+ is needed, in this day and age, to read "The Magnet" successfully.

I have always steadfastly maintained that the standard of education during my schooldays (1932-1944) was superior to that of the present time.

I commenced reading the "Magnet" at the start of the 1937 Raynham Castle Christmas Series, which would make me  $9\frac{1}{2}$  years of age, and never had any trouble in following the stories. Indeed if the paper had been at all difficult to read I would certainly never have forked out 2d. every Saturday.

JIM COOK (Auckland): I wonder if anybody among our hobby friends has a particular Hate? I have just one that will stay with me as long as I am able to see to read. And it is there in the Pearl edition of the C.D. It's that horrible spelling of Bessie Bunter! I have always detested this very juvenile literature that is not worthy to be included in our hobby.

For a very short time it was used in the St. Frank's magazine, but thankfully was stopped.

I just cannot see any fun in it at all - but perhaps a moron might. And I feel certain there aren't any of those in our hobby circle.

P. TIERNEY (Grimsby): I can understand R. J. Godsave's irritation with the childish absurdities occasionally introduced by Edwy Searles Brooks. "Pinpricks" is an apt description.

Charles Hamilton sometimes did the same. An example of this is in the "Flip" serial when Bunter obtains an evening paper for the racing results, confident that he has backed a winner. Before he finds that his horse came in last there is this piece of silly nonsense:

"In the stop-press column he learned - without the slightest interest - that General Chu-Chow had advanced upon Pong-Wong, causing

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the retreat of General Ping-Pong upon Wong-Bang."

The only explanation I can think of for such deliberate lowering of the literary style of both Hamilton and Brooks is that they might have thought their youngest readers would be amused by it.

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Season's Greetings to the Editor, fellow hobbyists, and friends.

JACK PARKHOUSE, 74 THE OVAL, BATH.

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# News of the Clubs

CAMBRIDGE

A rather small gathering of the club met at the home of Edward Witten on Sunday, 12th December. Chairman Vic Hearn presided. Christmas greetings were received from Jack Doupe in sunny Teneriffe. The first item on the Agenda was a Quiz by Bill Thurbon, based on his recent reading, ranging over old boys' books and general subjects, from the Marvel to the Hotspur, and from recent newspapers to the Bible. This was won by Jack Overhill. Members enjoyed Edwards hospitable tea, again of Bunterian magnitude, enlivened by seasonable mince pies. Edward then played the first record of the B. B. C. "Fifty Years" recording. Members were stirred with nostalgic memories as the old



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familiar broadcasts came over, Jack Overhill recalling the early days of 2LO, heard on the set of a friend, a Signals Sergeant, whose set occupied the whole of his kitchen table! Vic Hearn then gave a most interesting, and to the older members very enlightening talk on "The Hotspur". He illustrated his talk with items from his collection; gently reminded the Secretary that it had been seven school stories the Hotspur had contained, and described all these schools with illustrations from his copies. He had enjoyed the Hotspur, an all school story paper, as contrasting with the sports tales in The Champion. He gave a summary, with copious extracts, of the "Red Circle" story in Hotspur No. 82 of 23 March, 1935, "The navy from the school". He pointed out that, unlike the Hamilton schools, the boys of Red Circle did grow up and progress through the school, producing an influx of new characters. Vic was warmly thanked for his talk which brought to life the flavour of the 1930's.

Jack Overhill read a Christmas article he had written for the East Anglian Magazine, "Sing ye Merry", recalling a childhood Christmas of 1911; of the preparations of his father for Christmas; and of his carol-singing expedition with a pal, ending up at the house of the Reverend Conybeare, a well-known Cambridge local historian, where they received a whole sixpence, "a tanner", untold wealth in those distant days. This simple story cast a glow of Christmas happiness over the meeting. The next meeting will be on 9 January at the home of Bill Thurbon. Members passed a hearty vote of thanks to Edward and dispersed into a very misty night, exchanging the warmest Christmas greetings to each other. Thus ended a small, but most enjoyable meeting to wind up the 1976 season.

#### NORTHERN

Saturday, 11th December, 1976

A brisk winter's evening and a goodly gathering of the faithful with some of their families for a study tea - or might we call it a dormitory feast? - on this last meeting before the festive season begins.

Vernon-Smith, as usual, received a prefectorial order to refrain from smoking. That was, of course, before the Smithy Drive, when he

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really came into his own, and Simon Wilde had the highest score (no, the prize was not 100 Benson and Hedges - I think it was a Mars Bar!).

To tax our intellects was a jumbled names game organized by Jack Allison. The first part consisted of pairing off the names correctly and the second in solving the anagrams they formed. Geoffrey Wilde had the highest number of anagrams solved and Vera Good and Ron Hodgson had, equally, the highest number of correct names - they cast a die to produce a winner and Ron had the top score.

Dark deeds were evidently afoot, for a search was going on for the Courtfield Cracksman. When eventually found he was discovered to be the Staincliffe Cracksman in disguise!

Inevitably a balloon game - which produced loud bangs accompanied by shrieks from the ladies (sorry - the girls!). We half believed that at any moment Mr. Quelch would come hurrying to the scene to administer condign punishment! More realistically, some of us peeped through the curtains just to see if the police were about to investigate possible gun shots! Alas! No PC Tozer, either!

But, all in all, a happy evening, and we look forward to next term, meeting Saturday, 8th January - not at Greyfriars, we regret, but the next best place - at the Swarthmore Educational Centre, St. George's Square, Leeds. New boys - and girls - will be welcomed!

### LONDON

Three appropriate Christmas readings by the three Librarians - Roger Jenkins, Josie Packman and Bob Blythe, from respectively, the Gem, Sexton Blake and St. Frank's, got the Dulwich meeting off to a fine start. Bob Blythe conducted a Musical Anagram quiz, which was won by Brian Doyle, book prizes being presented by the quizmaster.

Bill Lofts rendered an abridged version of Derek Adley's article on "Our Favourite Characters". Winnie Morss was thanked for her efforts in connection with the Hamilton Centenary Exhibition at Walthamstow Library, and Maurice Hall was present to display the original art work in connection with the Hamilton stamp, and had "first day covers" on sale. John Wernham spoke to the gathering, and had copies of his Centenary book on sale.

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Josie Packman was warmly thanked for her hospitality, and for hosting such an excellent Christmas meeting.

Next meeting - Sunday, 9th January, at the home of Mrs. S. Baddiell, 43 Kendal Road, London N.W.10. Phone 452-7243.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

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THE EDITOR

wishes his readers everywhere

A PROSPEROUS AND VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

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PLUM'S SCHOOLDAYS

by Ernest Holman

In this present period of Hobby Anniversaries (Charles Hamilton, St. Frank's, Sexton Blake, Rookwood) I am here looking back for three quarters of a century.

1902, in fact - when P. G. Wodehouse's first novel came on to the market; it was the first of nearly a hundred novels from the pen of Plum - it was also the first of only a few novels of Public School life from this gifted writer. Many of P.G's novels in those early days were from previous serialisation of his works (principally in the 'Captain') and the first to achieve Hard Back publication was "The Pothunters". Records offer the information that the Publisher was Black; there were 272 pages; it was bound in royal blue cloth and decorated in silver; it contained a frontispiece and nine other illustrations. It provided the first glimpse of the boys of St. Austin's, a School that possessed nine Houses. The story is an interesting one concerning the robbery of School Trophies from the Sports Pavilion; all the many facets of fictional Public School life are neatly interjected throughout. We meet some of the characters who are to play parts in future St. Austin's yarns - Tony Graham, Babe MacArthur, 'Mutual Friend' Plunkett and a most engaging individual named Charteris, Editor of the 'Glow Worm' Magazine and known to his fellows as 'Alderman'.

A year was to pass before Black brought out Plum's second novel; this time the School was Beckford and it featured Alan Gethryn (known as The Bishop). He was Head of Leicester's and suffered the mortification of seeing his younger Uncle, Reginald Farnie, become a member of the Lower School. Hence the title, "A Prefect's Uncle". (I wonder if Coker Minor can be traced back to this stable?) Two members of the cast carried the names of Skinner and Gosling.

It was only a matter of two months after 'Uncle' that Black and P.G. took us back to St. Austin's. "Tales of St. Austin's" was an edition notable for the fact that it contained the works of three different artists. This first edition presented the reader with twelve short stories, in addition to four essays. Most of the cast of St. Austin's received at least one innings; "The Manoeuvres of Charteris" was reprinted under the title "Out of Bounds", with illustrations by Savile Lumley, in the 1927 'Holiday Annual'. As it happened, it was not an ideal choice to set among the Hamilton offerings (and contrasted badly with a P.G. Wodehouse 'short' called "Jackson's Dip" in the 1925 'Holiday Annual'). In its own environment, amongst the selection of St. Austin's tales, however, it fitted in quite well - the main fault, perhaps, was that it was a little long for a 'short'. Subsequent editions of this Book did not always include the entire contents of the original. Two names amongst the characters were Mellish and Smythe.

Almost another year went by before Black's latest Wodehouse - "The Gold Bat" - came along in 1904; here, for the first time, in book form, we were introduced to Wrykyn School. The main theme of the story was based on the final vacancy for a place in the School Team (to find an echo in a later Wrykyn story featuring Mike Jackson). Two characters here were named Trevor and Paget.

Plum took a short break from School stories in his next Novel, which was a retelling of the "William Tell" Classic. In 1905, however, Black took us to another Wodehouse School - Eckleton. This was "The Head of Kay's" (one Bob Fenn). Backgrounds naturally included sport - with incidents at a Camp in Aldershot. The rival House to Kay's was Blackburn's - the Head of which was named Jimmy Silver.

Two years were to pass before P.G. and Black were to offer us another school yarn. The intervening year produced Plum's first novel

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for Adults, published by George Newnes. It was the first version of that Ukridge Classic, "Love Among The Chickens". (The edition available today is an entirely rewritten (1921) version.) S. F. U. may seem, with his ginger-beer wired spectacles and shabby mackintosh, to be far removed from A. A. D. of St. Jim's - yet I have always found a similarity between Ukridge's simple faith in the obvious success of his chicken farm and that of Gussy when sketching out the future of the St. Jim's Teashop. In each case, disaster befell all efforts to 'save the day'.

In 1907, "The White Feather" took us again to Wrykyn. It was really a sequel to "The Gold Bat"; in a preface to the first edition, P. G. chides Black for not having published earlier short stories of Wrykyn (falling between "Gold Bat" and "Feather"). It was, he told them, an example of displaying the white feather! It would seem that these short stories of Wrykyn had appeared in a few Magazines - and they do not seem to have ever seen the light of day again. "The White Feather" is displayed by Sheen, who ducks a fight with village lads and sets out to redeem himself by taking boxing lessons - eventually winning the Public School Light Weights at Aldershot.

1907 also saw Cassell as the publishers of Wodehouse's Ninth Novel, described by them as partly autobiographical. It had the unusual incidence of four different narrators; the title, "Not George Washington", may have some relevance to the fact that the story concerned journalistic life! In mid 1908 the Glove published selections from their "By The Way" column, including several of Plum's contributions.

C. D. readers at the tail end of the nineteen sixties will recall the serialisation of a good deal of "The Swoop" by P. G. Wodehouse. Originally published in 1909 by Alston Rivers, it was the first Wodehouse Paper Back - there is a difference of opinion in places as to whether it had earlier appeared in Magazine form; if so, no-one has ever come up with definite evidence. It had white pictorial wrappers with an orange-red (Magnet?!) background. Subtitled "How Clarence Saved England", it told of a German invasion of this country being foiled by a Boy Scout.

It was in 1909 that the famous Mike Jackson came on the hard back scene. This Black publication, in its original edition, contained

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the episodes of Mike's cricket progress at Wrykyn and his 'demotion' by an irate parent to Sedleigh. (I never fail to enjoy the description of Mr. Jackson furiously kicking the waste paper basket prior to summoning up the necessary courage to break the news to Mike.) Later, the book was divided into two; the Wrykyn part still carried the title of "Mike", whilst the second half has borne the titles of "The Lost Lambs" and "Enter Psmith". Today, we know them as "Mike at Wrykyn" and "Mike and Psmith". The question of the final Cricket Colour to either Bob or Mike Jackson is neatly solved by the absence of Wyatt - enabling both brothers to take part in the relevant match. Rupert Psmith, the Socialist schoolboy from Eton, meets up with Mike at Sedleigh and a good deal of the story shows their antagonism to all things 'Sedleighian' and, in particular, cricket. Mike's cricketing genius is revealed when his House bat throughout an entire match without giving the opposition (including an unpopular Master) a chance at the wickets. Later on, Psmith sadly reveals the fact that at Eton he was suspected of developing into a good left-arm spin bowler. (The 'hiding' of one's cricketing ability will be recalled by Hamiltonians in a similar situation at Greyfriars, featuring Drake and Rodney.) An interesting point about the Sedleigh story must be mentioned - it includes an incident relating to paint on a shoe. In 1915 a Wodehouse story (featuring Lord Emsworth and Blandings for the first time) was published in the U.S.A. entitled "Something New". There was an event that connected secretary Baxter with a shoe possessing a paint mark. When this novel was published by Methuen in England under the title "Something Fresh" the shoe incident was omitted entirely.

Unhappily, 1909 was the end of the road for Plum as far as school stories were concerned. He penned the odd one or two in a few Magazines but they were not given a hard cover at any time. Mike and Psmith (like P.G. himself) moved on to other things - Psmith gradually came more and more to the fore. They both went to a City Bank (Wodehouse's own experiences as a Bank Clerk being cleverly and humorously told in the character of Mike) and thence to the U.S.A. These stories are available today in paper back as "Psmith in the City" and "Psmith Journalist". Eventually, Psmith met up with Lord Emsworth

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in "Leave It To Psmith" and finally became his Secretary, succeeding the eminent Baxter in that post. (The scene concerning Baxter and the Flower Pots also takes my mind to Hamilton - for in the speech and behaviour of Psmith in these events I always seem to see an older Cardew.) Mike Jackson makes only a brief appearance in this story, eeking out an uninteresting existence as a member of the teaching profession. (We are often left wondering why he never became a paid County cricketer.) Psmith's Secretaryship was never dealt with in subsequent stories, simply because both he and Mike faded permanently from the Wodehouse scene.

From 1902 to 1909 most of the school stories of P. G. Wodehouse appeared in novel form. The original "Mike" was published many times as two books (for a very concise review of "Mike", see Roger Jenkins 'Do You Remember' in September, 1972, C.D.) "Pothunters", "Prefect's Uncle", "Tales of St. Austin's" and "White Feather" were republished late in 1972 (refer again to C.D., this time for a succinct report on these four republished stories, in January 1973). "Gold Bat" and "Kay's" seem to have suffered the indignity of not having been reprinted for very many years now; as for the lamented Wrykyn short stories, they never did reach novel publication. Some of the Wodehouse School yarns found their way into the Second Series of the Boys' Friend. A few references to some of the Schools came in later Wodehouse novels - in a Jeeves/Wooster short story, Tuppy Glossop is set on by the opposing village Fifteen because he turns out for the Colours in his very vivid orange St. Austin's jersey.

Whilst these Wodehouse School stories were in an entirely different vein from Charles Hamilton's offerings (comparison for some semblance of similarity might be made with some of the works of Desmond Coke) they share with C. H.'s schools the benefit of 'living for ever'. Without doubt, they can still, today, offer very entertaining reading and - acid test of all stories - re-reading!

#### THE MAN OF THE FORTY FACES

by S. Gordon Swan

In the early decades of the twentieth century, among the many fictional characters introduced to the fortunate readers of that era, there was one called Hamilton Cleek, the Man of the Forty Faces. I

believe there was a silent film based on this character.

Originally he had been a criminal known as The Vanishing Cracksman, in association with a woman named Margot, Queen of the Apaches, but he changed over to the side of law and order and became a detective. In this occupation his knowledge of the underworld and his ability to adopt facial disguises served him in good stead.

These stories were not especially designed for juvenile consumption, although Cleek had a boy assistant with the unmusical name of Dollops. However, the connection with our old papers is to be found in Chums Annual, No. 28, for 1919/20, which contains five stories of the Man of the Forty Faces. The first is in issue No. 1424, 27th December, 1919 -- "The Riddle of the Eyes of Fire"; three others followed in successive weeks and the fifth appeared some months later.

The five yarns may have been derived from a collection of Cleek's early adventures; I have four books dealing with this character but they are all long novels. How or why these episodes found their way into the pages of Chums it is difficult to say. There does not appear to be an editorial note in a previous issue announcing their publication.

Of the authors, Thomas W. and Mary E. Hanshew, I know nothing whatsoever and should be interested if any reader could supply information on the subject. One wonders how many people today remember The Man of the Forty Faces. He belongs to an era which is all too rapidly fading into the distant past.

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LARCENY LANE

No doubt some readers saw "Blonde Crazy", starring James Cagney and Joan Blondell, on B. B. C. 2 television on the Saturday night before Christmas. I was tickled pink that it was put on. The film was released in this country under the title of "Larceny Lane", a point which was not mentioned in the Radio Times.

Followers of our Small Cinema series may recall that it was played in the Small Cinema when that famous place first "went talkie". "Larceny Lane" was the Small Cinema's first Cagney film, but I believe it was the famous actor's second starring film.

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FOR SALE: C. D. Annual 1963 - £1.50 + postage.

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