

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS DIGEST

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 371

NOVEMBER 1977



"The ability to elect with wisdom
fulness" proved the impact of the
soft vote. (See Page 214)

THE FIRST-EVER PICTURE OF HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH
HIS FIRST ARTIST - R. J. MACDONALD

Getting nearer Xmas! Enjoy and invest! Old Boys' Books and Comics are much in the limelight these days. One can anticipate a considerable appreciation in value over the years. Read and invest! Please give me a reminder from time to time for your "Wants". I've got a couple of filing cabinets full of wants and can't always get round to all of them! With all these sumptuous $\frac{1}{2}$ year volumes and other "goodies" around it's worth a try. Visitors always welcome but please give me a ring first. Quite a few bargains too! Boys' Friends, Heralds, Realms, Plucks, Marvels, Girls' Friends, Sports Library, Boys' Journal, All Sports Weekly, Football Special, Football & Sports Favourites, Aldines Half Holiday, Sports for Boys, Sport & Adventures, Sports Budgets, Boys' Realm Library, etc. All $\frac{1}{2}$ years, v. g. c., contents as new. Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ price to clear or offers. Boys of England, Boys of the Empire, Boys' Comic Journal and many others also at greatly reduced prices! I am trying to reduce some of my stock.

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— STORY PAPER —

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W. G. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

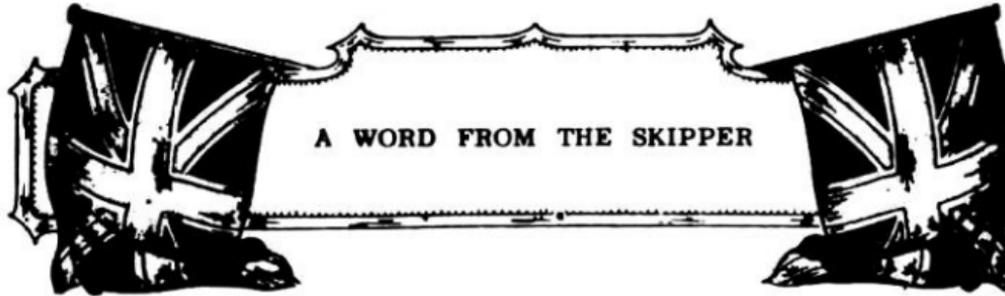
Vol. 31

No. 371

NOVEMBER 1977

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A WORD FROM THE SKIPPER

THE PINK REVIEWERS

Australian reader, Joe Williamson, has sent me a cutting from a Melbourne newspaper. This contains a review of "The Best of British Pluck", a book which I have not seen so far, but which apparently takes a long and affectionate look at the famous British magazine "The Boy's Own Paper".

"I don't recall reading "Boy's Own Paper", but I object to the reviewer's comment on the Gem and the Magnet," says Mr. Williamson. I very much agree with Mr. Williamson.

The reviewer, in this case, is Mr. Peter Ryan, and there is

much that he says about the B. O. P. which will find a warm echo in all our breasts. For instance:

"The occasional quaint phrase and old-fashioned opinion make it easy today to score cheap funny points off B. O. P. , but that isn't really good enough. It was interesting, informative, literate, rational, and decent. Anybody who wants to mount upon it a general attack must be prepared to champion obscurity, dullness, illiteracy, ratbaggery and nastiness. Who's game to take on good old B. O. P. on those terms?"

Few of us would disagree with any of that. Where the reviewer slips up is in a gratuitous and offensive attack on the Gem and Magnet. He says:

"Even at its worst it had little in common with Billy Bunterism and the snob-school fantasies of Gem and Magnet."

Just why that reviewer made such a comment it is hard to say, for it has nothing to do with the success or otherwise of the B. O. P. We have occasionally come on that sort of thing in our own papers, and, so far as I can see, the only reason can be political.

Whether the B. O. P. ever had a "huge circulation and influence" as is claimed, I would not like to say. It may have done when it was a penny paper, before competition hit it hard. If so, that huge circulation and influence coincided with Talbot Baines Reed's public school stories, which surely would be as unpleasant for pink reviewers as Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

But Reed was dead before we were born, and I only knew the B. O. P. as a shilling or sixpenny monthly, so far as I knew it at all. I met Reed in stiff covers, and loved his stories. I never found the B. O. P. anything but rather dull, though my old Headmaster and his staff recommended it to us all. I plumped for the Magnet and the rest, all the time.

Does the reviewer mean that the B. O. P. must have been more worthy because it cost 1/- or 6d as against the Magnet and Gem's 1d and 2d? It leaves one in a twist, doesn't it?

That bit about the Gem and Magnet is a pity, for apart from that, it is a good review. In a paragraph which gave me a chuckle, he attributes the eventual demise of the B. O. P. in 1967 to modern education. "The hapless victims of today's teachers would simply find B. O. P. too

hard. They would lack the vocabulary to comprehend and the concentration to complete the reading of the longer sentences, despite their faultless structure and their splendid crisp style. The BOP was destroyed by education, or what now passes for it."

Well, be that as it may. Everything has to come to an end, and in recent years we have so often seen the baby thrown out with the bath water. Personally, I give full credit to the B. O. P. for everything it did. But I am quite certain that the influence of the Magnet and the other papers we loved was the greatest influence for good in this land of ours when we were young. And nothing has replaced it.

AN EYE ON ARTISTS

One great charm of the large-sheeted papers like the Boys' Friend and its companion papers is the way that some of the artists were given the space to produce impressive illustrations. The famous names among artists - names which will live for ever - are Chapman, Shields, Macdonald, and Wakefield, but one can hardly deny that they owe their fame to their association with the Hamilton papers.

An artist to whom I gave less than credit was Briscoe.* I detested his work as a substitute artist in the Gem when I was a lad, partly because I hated Mac to be absent. But now I have great admiration for his work in the Hamilton Edwards papers. His crowd scenes are most impressive, and I feel sure that in later years his work was underrated. George Gatcombe's large pictures for the girls contained mannerisms but were fine, and he was far and away the most successful in that sphere. Abney Cummings and Louis Smythe were superb, and though I have no claim to artistic appreciation - I merely know what I like - I feel that quite a few of them could well have been superior in talent to the more famous men.

A point in passing. A recent article on Wakefield in a contemporary magazine states that he was the first man to illustrate Rookwood, until he left to go to the war. This is not accurate. The first illustrator of Rookwood was Macdonald. When he went to the navy he was followed at Rookwood by Hayward. Wakefield first drew Rookwood in November 1918, and his is the name which will always be associated with that school.

AND IN CONCLUSION

The 1977 Collectors' Digest Annual - our 31st edition - is due out in mid-December. Have you ordered your copy yet?

THE EDITOR

DANNY'S DIARY

NOVEMBER 1927

In the Magnet the series is continuing about the new boy, Bright, who is such a horrid lad that he has quickly earned the nickname of the "Toad". The month's first story is "A Great Fifth at Greyfriars", and the chums make a guy of Sir Hilton Popper. It is a delicious tale which made me laugh a lot.

Oddly enough, the next tale "A Ventriloquist at Large" was not by the real Frank Richards, though it introduced Sir Hilton again. I thought it good - much better than most non-Richards tales are - but it was strange to have it in the middle of the Bright series.

With the next story "The Toad of the Remove" we are back with Bright, and this tale is linked with the Gem, for Levison comes to Greyfriars from St. Jim's. Levison's father inherited all Mr. Thorpe's money. Mr. Thorpe was once a master at Greyfriars. But Mr. Bright is claiming all the money, on account of a will. But the Brights and the Levisons believe that there is a still later will, hidden somewhere at Greyfriars, and Bright and Ernest Levison are both searching for the will. Mr. Levison is ruined if he has to pay back the money to Mr. Bright. But Mr. Levison once gave a substantial sum to Greyfriars, as he knew that was what the old Greyfriars master wanted. So the Head of Greyfriars lets the two Levison boys go to Greyfriars for a term without paying fees.

Last story of the month was "Levison Makes Good". He has an uphill fight at Greyfriars, for, when he was a pupil there, he had a bad reputation, though he has since reformed.

Mr. Shields illustrations to this series are just fine. Mr.

Chapman is illustrating the St. Sam's tales which run in the centre of the Magnet, and are always good fun. In fact, it always seems to me that they are really guying the Greyfriars tales, which is very naughty of someone.

The first automatic telephone exchange has been put into service in London. This is the Holborn Exchange.

Two young men have died descending Snowdon in the dark.

The Greyfriars tale in the Schoolboys' Own Library this month is called "The No-Surrender Schoolboy" and it is exceptionally good. The other tale "Parted Chums" is also by Frank Richards, but it is about a school called St. Kit's.

A new Musical Comedy entitled "Hit the Deck" is due to start this month at the London Hippodrome, and questions have been asked about it in parliament. It is an American show, with American sailors in it in the New York presentation. Over here they will wear British sailor uniforms, and some MPs think we ought not to make the change.

The remarkable series about the "death" of Walter Church ended in the Nelson Lee Library with "Handforth's Triumph". All St. Frank's thinks that Church is dead, and when Handy insists otherwise, they think Handy has gone potty. But Handy eventually defeats Zuma, the Mystic, who has eluded the police. A very unusual and exciting series.

In "Armistice Day at St. Frank's" Teddy Long comes in with the tale that there is a mysterious wild man in Bellton Wood. He is not believed, but the wild man actually enters St. Frank's and sits down at a desk in the form-room. The wild man has lost his memory. The next story was "St. Frank's in Flanders" in which Nipper & Co. set out on a trip to the old battlefields, but without getting their Headmaster's permission first.

Last of the month "Handforth's Barring-Out" started a new series. Handforth is sentenced to a flogging for something he hasn't done. No wonder he bars out, - and his pals back him up.

Robert Delaney, who is said to be the original "cat burglar", has been sent to prison for seven years.

At the pictures this month we have seen Betty Balfour in "A Sister of Six"; Henry Edwards in "The Flag Lieutenant"; John Barrymore and Mary Astor in "Don Juan"; Larry Semon in "Spuds"; and Dorothy

Mackaill in a naval film "Convoy". Mum and I went and saw Ramon Novarro in "Ben Hur". It is one of the finest films I have ever seen.

There has been a terrible disaster in Australia. In Sydney Harbour a ferry was rammed and sunk by a steamer, and 80 passengers were drowned.

In the Gem there has been "Anybody Seen Our Guy?" in which Monty Lowther is sacked for making an explosion in Mr. Linton's study. In the sequel, "Monty Lowther's Masquerade", he goes back to St. Jim's as a new page, Timoth Tipple, and proves his innocence in a pretty silly affair. Then came just one story "Levison's Last Day", which is the St. Jim's little section of the Bright-Thorpe-Levison series now running in the Magnet. It explains how Mr. Levison inherited a lot of money from his Uncle Thorpe long ago, and now Mr. Bright is claiming it, so Mr. Levison is ruined. And the Levison boys leave for Greyfriars.

Last of the month was "Wally D'Arcy's Feud" in which Wally is in trouble over a hoax on Colonel Bland, a school governor.

The serial "The Rookwood Dictator" has ended in the Gem. I read some of it. Another Rookwood serial starts next month.

England has won the First Test Match by beating South Africa by ten wickets at Johannesburg.

In the Popular the series is still running about Jimmy Silver & Co. in the Canadian West - a much better series than the recent one in the Gem - and also the series about Bunter as King of the Congo.

EDITORIAL COMMENT: S. O. L. No. 63, "The No-Surrender Schoolboy" comprised two consecutive stories of the autumn of 1913. The Bounder is in feud with Mr. Quelch, and this was almost certainly the finest Bounder story of the entire Red Cover era. S. O. L. No. 64, "Parted Chums" featured originally in Hinton's "School & Sport" paper of 1921, reprinted a few years later in the Boys' Friend. A re-hash of the "Rivals & Chums" B. F. L. about De Courcy of Highcliffe, it has never been clear whether the A. P. knew that the tale had been previously published. According to Hamilton, Hinton never paid him for it.

As a tale of a schoolboy secret society, the Band of Fascists, the Gem serial "The Rookwood Dictator" may have suited the easily-pleased reader. By accident or design, it featured a Hamilton name from much earlier days, Captain Punter, but the whole story was painfully counterfeit with its glut of adverbs, and especially the adverb "coolly" which was repeated ad nauseam.)

HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR ANNUAL YET?

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

For some time now I have realised that many of the Sexton Blake authors names are not listed in the catalogue so I have carefully gone through the Catalogue and checked the names. A complete list is included in Blakiana this month so that your catalogues may be amended if you wish to do so.

Our contributor this month is once again Mr. S. Gordon Swan to whom we are indebted for very many interesting articles. This one about the ladies of the Blake Saga touches on some things that have already been printed, but as the previous article was published in a C.D. Annual it is possible that many of our new readers may not have a copy so I thought it would be nice to include this article for their delectation.

REVISED LIST OF SEXTON BLAKE AUTHORS

E. Alais	G. Bowman	P. Cooke	F. H. Evans
D. L. Ames	L. Black	G. Carr	C. F. Frost
J. Andrews	L. Brittany	M. Darran	V. Fremlin
G. Anderson	S. Blakesley	A. Davis	M. Frazer
W. Arthur	A. Barnard	S. Drew	A. Ford
J. Ascott	A. Baron	J. Drummond	R. F. Foster
H. Blyth	W. H. Baker	G. Dilnot	A. Fawcett
C. T. Baine	J. Burke	M. B. Dix	M. Grant
E. Brindle	P. Bishop	L. C. Douthwaite	E. J. Gannon
C. Brisbane	R. W. Bobin	E. Dudley	A. Grahame
E. H. Burrage	W. J. Bayfield	E. Danesford	W. M. Graydon
A. Blair	L. J. Beeston	R. Dolphin	S. Gordon
T. C. Bridges	W. A. Ballinger	G. Evans	C. Gates
Stacy Blake	G. Chester	A. Edgar	H. Gregory
J. Breasley	J. Creasey	W. G. Elliott	R. Goyne
L. Bidston	L. Clavton	W. Edwards	N. Goddard
E. S. Brooks	B. Claverton	R. C. Elliott	C. Hayter
L. H. Brooks	H. Cleveley	R. Essex	P. Herring
J. G. Brandon	P. Chambers		

H. G. Hill	H. King	E. Perowne	J. T. Story
R. Hardinge	F. Lelland	A. J. Palk	G. Sydney
J. Hunter	D. Long	D. H. Parry	E. Semphill
C. M. Hincks	B. Lyndon	W. J. Passingham	G. H. Teed
R. L. Hadfield	M. Lomax	E. Pickering	H. W. Twyman
D. L. Huddleston	W. J. Lomax	P. Quiroulle	N. Taylor
A. S. Hardy	H. Meredith	W. S. Rae	W. Tyrer
S. Hope	P. Morris	G. E. Rochester	H. Townley
S. Hood	R. Murray	G. Rees	M. Thomas
R. Howard	A. Murray	W. Reynolds	H. Tremayne
E. Holmes	E. J. Murray	D. Reid	W. Tremellin
W. B. Home-Gall	A. C. Murray	H. St. John	E. Treeton
N. Hinds	T. G. D. Maitland	J. Staniforth	P. Urquhart
D. H. Hyde	H. Maxwell	M. Scott	W. P. Vickery
E. Harrison	D. Macluire	C. Stevens	R. Wray
M. Hamilton	O. Merland	F. A. Symonds	C. Wolfe
V. J. Hanson	C. Milne	A. Skene	R. Whitley
H. E. Inman	A. Maclean	J. Sylvester	T. C. Wignall
L. Jackson	P. Meriton	J. Stamper	S. Webber
J. G. Jones	W. Mcneilly	R. Standish	G. D. Goodman
W. Jardine	C. Malcolm	D. Stuart	J. W. Wheway
W. Jones	M. Osbome	S. G. Shaw	M. Whyte
Dr. W. Jago	J. N. Pentelow	H. Scott	N. Wood-Smith
G. Johns	M. Poole	S. Sprigg	R. Williams
A. Kirby	A. Parsons	M. Storm	F. Warwick
A. Kent	A. Paterson	W. Shute	D. Walshe
B. Kent	J. Purley	P. Saxon	W. A. Williams
		T. Stenner	
		J. Stagg	

THE FEMININE TOUCH

by S. Gordon Swan

The Sexton Blake saga was enlivened by the presence of innumerable women of various races and types, some on the right side of the law, others decidedly lethal ladies.

Surely the award for creating most female characters in the series must go to G. H. Teed, who was responsible for the following formidable list: Yvonne, Roxane, June Severance, Nirvana, Marie

Galante, Mary Trent, Vali Mata-Vali, Muriel Marl and The Orchid, in addition to a host of other girls who appeared in only one story. Among those listed above were an Australian, a Canadian, an octoroon and a part-Japanese --- a varied enough collection. Many of these figured in adventures set against the colourful backgrounds which the author knew so well how to convey.

Anthony Skene introduced us to one notable girl in Julia Fortune, a Secret Service agent who was aptly described as a Golden Girl, and who had an undoubted yen for Sexton Blake. She was associated with the detective in some of his duels of wits with the incomparable Zenith. The same writer created The Gargoyle's Decoy, a girl named Gloria Dene -- "Brown Bessie", as she was called -- by the test of logic a female desperado, by the test of instinct "steel true and blade straight". Gloria of the arrogant mien, of the honest blue eyes, of the lilting laugh, of the ringing speech; a child yet a thinker. Loving and lovable, yet the decoy of a desperate criminal. We should have heard more of this girl; unfortunately, beyond a brief mention in a later story, she passed into limbo.

One is apt to associate W. Murray Graydon with swooning maidens and helpless heroines. However, this was not entirely the case. When Blake was masquerading in three identities in Berlin during the Great War he met a French spy called Roma Lorraine who could not by any means be described as a helpless female. The part she played would surely have satisfied any Woman's Libber. And then there was Lossie Cameron, a Scots girl who wrestled with Tinker and got the better of him, much to that youth's discomfiture. This again should have pleased campaigners for women's rights. Coming from a writer with a normally old-fashioned approach these two girls were rather remarkable.

One probably forgotten heroine is Glory Gale, a girl reporter who was featured long ago in several stories by John W. Bobin. She had no romance with Sexton Blake; the object of her affections was Markham Dean, the editor of the paper for which she worked. J. W. Bobin also presented us with a woman criminal in Kathleen Maitland, the widow of an American crook, Ezra Q. Maitland. She was known as Broadway Kate, a character no doubt inspired by the notorious real-life

Chicago May. I think both these characters faded out before 1920.

A famous author who wrote a mere handful of Blake stories -- D. H. Parry -- gave us a German heroine, Thyrsa von Otto, and went so far as to describe Blake as her lover in one sequence. Whether this raised any eyebrows at the time it is hard to say, as the period was as far back as 1908. Parry also, in a Union Jack entitled "The Hypnotist", informed us that Blake kept a photograph of a girl called Doreen Elliott, which he found himself looking at too often. He had once heard her sing a song called "Goodbye, Dear Eyes", and he bought the music of this and would play it while looking at the photograph. When Doreen Elliott married somebody else at the end of the story her husband was mystified by the fact that Blake suddenly went abroad. Evidently Doreen Elliott was close to being a potential Mrs. Blake.

In a story called "The Clue of the Golden Hair" by H. Gregory Hill, there appeared a seductive female crook nicknamed Conversation Kate. At the end of the adventure she appeared to be reforming under Blake's influence. Her remark that "if there were more men in the world like you there would be fewer women like me" suggests that she would have liked closer ties with the detective.

By contrast with these writers, Cecil Hayter's Union Jack stories were conspicuously devoid of feminine interest. So far as we know, Sir Richard Losely was a bachelor and, while Lobangu had a wife or two, these were mostly dealt with by the substitute authors who wrote of these characters. I recall one of Hayter's tales in which the secondary hero went so far as to state that he was engaged to a girl, but she never made an appearance in the story. Admittedly, there was a Rider-Haggard-type priestess in the B. F. L. "In the Hands of the Headhunters", but she was a rare exception. However, Cecil Hayter was responsible for a lot of stories in The Penny Pictorial and it is likely that he introduced feminine characters into some of those.

Coutts Brisbane -- the name we know him by best -- brought a few ladies into his narratives, including one unscrupulous woman named Helen Dal who married the redoubtable Dr. Ferraro, but in his conception Blake took a rather cynical view of marriage, judging by the detective's remarks.

Whether they were criminals or untarnished heroines, the women

I have mentioned added lustre and glamour to the stories of the great detective and supplied that touch of romance which helps to make the Saga memorable.

NELSON LEE COLUMN

BROOKS AND HAMILTON - 2

by Nic Gayle

Recently, through the courtesy of the pages of C.D. , I made the simple observation that Brooks and Hamilton were different artists, but at the same time that Brooks developed some of his art from Hamilton. I would like to elaborate on this in relation to some of the characters created in the pages of the Nelson Lee Library.

It would seem to me that the St. Frank's characters broadly divide themselves into three groups are not mutually exclusive, and the fact that some of the characters therein belong to more than one group is a reflection of the development of E.S.B. as a creative artist. To play analyst for a while, these three categories are as follows: the first, those characters that are closely derived from Hamilton, and remained Hamilton characters throughout the Nelson Lee, never developing separate identities. Secondly, characters closely derived from Hamilton that DID grow up to develop as individuals in their own right; and thirdly, the original creation. Let us consider them in order.

Many (but not all) of the St. Frank's minor Walk-on parts have their origins in the Magnet and Gem, and the roots of such as Yakama and Hussi Khan lie obviously in Hurree Singh. Similarly, Cornelius Trotwood and Tom Dutton. But the second category is more complex and worth dwelling on. These are the characters that did escape from their Hamilton orbit and eventually lead a separate and independent existence of their own. The arrival of De Valerie - 'the Rotter' - at St. Frank's was an answer to Vernon Smith, 'the Bounder', but it was obvious from the start that there was something different about this tantalising boy which, even after the customary reformation, lay dormant until the Dr. Karnak series brought it out years later and cast a new light on him. In the same way, Montie ('begad!') Tregellis -

West seemed a pale reflection of Gussy ('Bai jove!') D'arcy in the beginning, but Brooks apparently realised the pitfalls of this before long, and steered his creation away from this cul-de-sac into calmer and more subtly ineffectual waters, upon which the limelight inevitably played less often. Handy, Church and Maclure had their beginnings in Coker, Potter and Greene, but what a marvellous transformation this trio was to undergo, never severing their roots completely, but eventually becoming full and 'original' characters in their own right. Let us note in passing that in the same fascinating way so Willy Handforth developed from Wally D'arcy.

The last category is a fascinating one. Who were Brook's original characters? - that is, those who pay no homage or even lip service to Hamilton at all? Archie Glenthorne, a strong contender, was probably the result of a need for a more definable comic figure at St. Frank's in 1922 (the rise of Billy Bunter? ...) and he came from quite a different source - P. G. Wodehouse, an author for whom E.S.B. had a great admiration. In some fleeting and indefinable way, Archie and Phipps managed to maintain a subtle independence from Bertie Wooster and Jeeves, one of the noteworthy sidelights of the St. Frank's saga. Possibly it was their extreme youth that saved them. However, the coming of Archie had one unforeseen effect - it introduced a faint but definable anachronistic split between Archie, who was essentially a child of the roaring twenties in his manner and speech, and Montie Tregellis-West, whose roots (together with Gussy's) belong to an earlier and more studiously elegant age.

William Napoleon Browne was a marvellously original schoolboy who owed nothing whatsoever to Hamilton. His character was so compelling and convincing that even when he played only minor walk-on parts, characters less brilliantly conceived seemed to pale beside him into wooden insignificance.

Of course, in this short article I can only touch on a handful of characters, and many old favourites have had to be omitted. But if I may finish on a personal note, am I alone in mourning the fact that that lovely and heartwarming character, the 'Bosun' - Tom Burton - was never developed? For me, his peculiar and quaint charm graces any story he appears in. Oh, for what might have been!

WHERE HAVE ALL THE YOUNG(St. Frank's) MEN GONE?

by William Lister

It is not secret that I am an Edwy Searles Brooks fan. Any pages written by E. S. B. turns into Gold Leaf for me, whether they are to be found in the Lee, or the Union Jack, the Monster Library or the Schoolboys' Own Library.

The same golden glow can appear on the pages of a "Victor Gunn" book or a "Berkely Gray", as behind those names lay the pen of Brooks. It is when Brooks writes under his pen-names that we catch a glimpse of some of the St. Frank's boys or, at least, their characters shining through one of his new creations.

You may wonder why I have been reading Victor Gunn and Berkely Gray again. I've been encouraged! As my eyes cease to cope with small print, I cannot enjoy my reading as of yore (not even with a reading glass) so imagine my delight in finding that the library selection of the "Ulverscroft" large print editions have a few of the "Gunn" and "Gray" tales among them. Furthermore, I am informed that they can get me several more titles, at least seven of Victor Gunn and Berkely Gray's. If ever I came into a fortune I would have all the favourite "Nelson Lee's" in the Ulverscroft print.

Edwy Searles Brooks fans will know the "Gunn" books feature Cromwell and Lister - detectives, while "Gray" features that adventurer Norman Conquest.

If any "Nelson Lee" enthusiasts care to study some of the characters that appear in these stories they will find glimpses of Handforth, Archie Glenthorne, Nipper, and Lord Dorrimore. The current tale I am reading, by Victor Gunn, "The Next One to Die", features a night porter, name of Jobling that could be our old friend the caretaker of St. Frank's. Its good to think he found another job when "St. Frank's" closed. One can spend an interesting time tracing some of the St. Frank's characters on other pages in another world.

* * * * *
WANTED GREATLY: Magnets 755, 762, 768, 769, 782, 831, 833, 850, 865, 871, 888, 902, 941, 948, 949, 951, 985, 995. Many before 498. Good prices or generous exchanges.

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TRIBUTES TO FRANK LAY

From W. O. G. LOFTS. Frank Vernon Lay was not only a dealer, but also a keen enthusiast on all matters pertaining to Old Boys' Books. His excellent articles in the C.D. and Annual confirm this. Probably I knew Frank far better than most collectors, being connected in many research projects with him through the years. When you got to know him, he was friendly, anxious always to please, and sometimes too trusting. Not always a good businessman, but he had a wide range of friends in the hobby. His own boyhood favourites were Nelson Lee and The Boys' Magazine, though in later years he devoted more time to Detective fiction and books of Henty, where he was a world authority. He will be sadly missed.

From Mrs. J. PACKMAN. He was a great friend of both myself and my dear Len and helped us to obtain many of the items in our collections of books. He was always willing to find items for me such as many of my Nero Wolfe tales and very special items from America of the Star Trek Saga, unobtainable in this country. I owe him many thanks and also feel I have lost a very kind friend. I hope Mrs. Lay will accept my sympathy and condolences.

From L. S. ELLIOTT. I was deeply shocked to learn of the death of Frank Lay, a friend and colleague for 20 years. The last time we spoke on the phone, he appeared cheerful, weak but optimistic about his recovery. With many others, I will miss a fine friend and co-collector in the book field.

From J. E. MILLER. Like so many other OBB enthusiasts whom I have never met he counted as a friend, not just because of a shared interest but because of the warmth, kindness and courtesy he unfailingly showed in correspondence. It may sound absurd to talk of a sense of loss in the case of a person one has never even seen but that is nevertheless what I feel. Only a few weeks ago, Mr. Lay supplied me with a sought-after copy of Seamark's The Mystery Maker. Tragically, he has now found his own mystery and I would like to join everyone sending his family and close friends deepest sympathy.

* * * * *

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 1 - BILLY BUNTER

It is just because Billy Bunter is Charles Hamilton's most celebrated character that he is consistently quoted by those who want a convenient stick to belabour his author. It is not appropriate here to embark upon a comprehensive character study of Bunter, but it might be interesting to consider certain aspects in order to see if he was a really believable character.

A doctor once told me that Bunter's corpulence and squeaky voice form a well-known medical syndrome which persists into adult life. I

do not suggest that Charles Hamilton copied these symptoms out of a medical textbook any more than Shakespeare did when he portrayed some technically accurate symptoms of mental derangement and obsession: both writers were undoubtedly observing life.

Psychiatrists often say that compulsive eating is a substitute for affection, and from this follows all the results of Bunter's greediness - raiding larders, cadging loans, and fishing for invitations for the holidays. Until the Whiffles circus series, Bunter was usually nothing more than an utterly detestable character (though no doubt sociologists would excuse his misdeeds on the ground that he suffered from deprivation). What Charles Hamilton succeeded in doing in the Whiffles series was to engage the reader's sympathy on Bunter's behalf: from this time onward we actually wanted this young rascal to succeed in his nefarious schemes. I sometimes wonder whether this remarkable achievement of Charles Hamilton's has been sufficiently recognised. When I look back through literature the only other instance I can find is Falstaff in Shakespeare's "Henry IV" plays.

So far I think we are on firm ground in claiming that Bunter is not only a credible character but also an outstanding artistic creation. Marshes and quicksands loom ahead, however, when the vexing topic of ventriloquism comes to mind. The first attribute of the ventriloquist is to be able to assume a new voice or to imitate someone else's, and the Magnet has many instances of Bunter's tricks on the telephone and elsewhere in which he assumes not merely the voice but also the phraseology of the person concerned. Having come across a group of boys enjoying one of their number giving an imitation of me, I am quite prepared to acknowledge that the gift for mimicry exists among boys. What I cannot accept is the supposed ability to throw one's voice. On many occasions Bunter contrived to make voices come from locked cupboards, savage growlings from under the table, or a wasp's buzzing circulate round the form room. That he could speak without moving his lips (as do ventriloquists who work dummies) is acceptable, but the idea that he could actually throw his voice or make it seem to be on the move is so incredible as to amount to a sort of gimmickry, which I cannot help considering to be regrettable. Bunter had so many other qualities that made him extremely valuable in assisting the mechanism of the plot that

it was a pity Charles Hamilton felt it necessary to add an unbelievable characteristic which leaves an undesirable blemish. Perhaps the reason was that Bunter's ventriloquial powers date back to the first year of the Magnet and in 1908 the author could have little idea just how long his new school would endure.

* * * * *

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 220. THE NABOB OF BHANIPUR

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Nabob of Bhanipur, was generally called Inky by the boys of Netherby. Knowles had given him the name. It was shorter than his real one, and, as Knowles said, it was more descriptive. But Hurree Singh was the most genial and good-natured fellow at Netherby, and he did not mind.

And there was silly little us thinking that it was Bob Cherry who first called our old friend Inky.

It is odd indeed that Hurree Singh learned his weird and wonderful English in the classroom of his old tutor, Mook Mookerjee, for, though the Nabob's earlier brand of English was a bit uncommon, it was not much like the quaint speech which Mr. Quelch accepted without turning a hair in the Remove formroom at Greyfriars.

"Pardon me, my friend," exclaimed Hurree Singh of Netherby, "but I observe the board which states that the trespasser will be visited with severe punishment."

Quite a few Greyfriars enthusiasts are aware that Hurree Singh was the first created of all the Greyfriars characters and that he was a member of a schoolboy trio of whom the leader was Owen Redfern, and the third member was Lawrence. They were in the Third Form at Netherby. Plenty readers know that Netherby was eventually closed, for some reason which is very far from clear, and the main characters went to Beechwood Academy. In fact, most of our readers are acquainted with "The Boys of Beechwood" which we reprinted a few years ago in a Collectors' Digest Annual.

I assumed, and I expect that everybody else did, too, that there was a series about Netherby, followed by another series about Beechwood Academy, after which our Mr. Hamilton closed down Beechwood, and

sent Hurree Singh, along with a number of French and German boys, to Greyfriars. And Inky seems very easily to have forgotten his old bosom pals, Owen Redfern and Lawrence. At least, he never mentioned them again once he got to Greyfriars.

It was really most mysterious, as Maxwell Scott said when he opened his Nelson Lee serial, "Birds of Prey".

For many years I have possessed lovely copies of two Netherby stories "Chums of the Third" of May 1907, and "The Mysterious Mossoo" of a few months later, plus, from early 1908, "The Boys of Beechwood".

For years I tried to complete the series concerning Hurree Singh's first two schools, wondering just how many stories there were in the Netherby series and how many there were in the Beechwood lot.

I never got hold of any more. This is not surprising. There were no more. The three I had comprised the lot.

It is surprising, in a way, that more readers did not realise, earlier on, that Charles Hamilton, Martin Clifford, and Frank Richards were all one and the same writer. For the Netherby stories were published under the Hamilton name, "The Boys of Beechwood" was credited to Martin Clifford, and, when Hurree Singh turned up at Greyfriars, those famous tales appeared under the name of Frank Richards. And it does not say much for the intelligence of readers that so few of them found the vital links.

Presumably, Charles Hamilton decided that Inky was too good a character to waste on just three stories, though it must be admitted that there was nothing particularly striking in the Hurree Singh of either Netherby or Beechwood, though that obscure origin is intensely interesting to us, all these years later. One of these days we will serialise one of the Netherby tales in the Digest.

And, just in passing, Hurree Singh's first artist was Mr. R. J. Macdonald, who illustrated "Chums of the Third", in the 'Marvel'.

As for Owen Redfern and Lawrence, the other pair in the trio to which Inky once belonged, they just disappeared, perhaps not a lot lamented. Though, as is fairly well known, Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence, as a result of the author's reluctance to abolish tuneful names, turned up in the Blue Gem as three scholarship boys in the New House at St. Jim's. The fact that they were scholarship boys was lost

in the mists of time, for St. Jim's never presented arrant snobbery in the manner which Greyfriars and Rookwood fans found embarrassing now and then.

There is yet another remarkable point. Another Owen Redfern was the main character in yet another Hamilton school, in a story entitled "The Cock House at Carnforth", published only a few months before Netherby. The author's propensity for repetition of names was really carried to absurd lengths in those days. Presumably it was just carelessness or indifference on the part of a busy writer, but one wonders that some editors did not draw his attention to it.

In conclusion, one wonders, idly, just what was in the author's mind when, after two stories, he sent his main Netherby characters to Beechwood Academy, among a number of comic European boys. Did he think, possibly, that the comic foreigners would catch on? Then Greyfriars started, and the stories were much more successful, not because they were all that better, but because they were much more frequent, regular, and had their own paper, the Magnet. Were the comic foreigners then transferred to Greyfriars with the idea that they would bring permanent humour to that school? And did they fail to catch on, so the comic Europeans left, and Inky stayed on to become one of the finest of the Greyfriars characters?

If so, Hurree Singh of Greyfriars may have been a lucky chance, and not the inspired piece of planning which, fondly, we like to believe.

* * * * *

REVIEWS

THE GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL 1978

(Howard Baker: £4.50)

This book cannot help being a smash hit as Winter deepens and Christmas is in the offing. As Shakespeare might have said about it (he said something of the sort about Cleopatra): "Its great joy is its infinite variety". As one reads a lot and browses a little and often, something fresh keeps on turning up.

Opening the bill, Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig take a view of the Greyfriars story and its author over six reigns, an enjoyable analysis. Then follows a Magnet story "The Mystery of Wharton Lodge", set very early in the New Year of 1928, while the Christmas Holiday at the Lodge has not yet ended. A charming tale, happily written, and just the thing for the festive season.

Next, from the same period, exactly fifty years ago, there is a Gem containing "The

White Cavalier", a story which starts off at Cardew's home and then transfers to Eastwood House. Hamilton wrote very little for the Gem at this period, and one can appreciate that readers welcomed this little "single" in its day. It was to be eleven years before Hamilton wrote another new Christmas story for the Gem in 1939.

Apart from a great deal of splendid genuine reading material, there is much to fascinate the historian and researcher. For instance, the Popular for Christmas 1920. The Greyfriars story "Christmas at Bunter Court" is a substitute effort, but it is interesting as the last one of a long series of sub stories. 17 months earlier, the editor had announced the "grand news" that from then on, May 1919, there would be "brand new stories of Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood". That might have caused a mild cheer had they been genuine stories. Unfortunately, none of them was. New stories of Rookwood were soon abandoned, with a return to reprints of that school. The St. Jim's tales ceased entirely, to be replaced by serials. But the new sub tales of Greyfriars went on for a long time - 17 months to be exact. The sub writer introduced a leading character of his own - one Dennis Carr, who even became captain of the Remove for a time. At any rate, "Christmas at Bunter Court" was the very last of them. The following week the old Greyfriars tales were back, and there must have been rejoicing among those who could tell butter from marge.

Also in this same issue of the Popular is a Rookwood tale "Rough on Jimmy Silver". There is, also, a bit of interesting history attached to this very pleasant romp. It is the first half of a long Rookwood tale "The Rookwood Raiders" which appeared in the Christmas Double Number (a giant issue) of the Boys' Friend in 1915. It was, in fact, two normal length Rookwood stories joined together. It was not a Yuletide story. The Macdonald illustration (he was the first Rookwood artist) is reproduced in this Popular.

But we are not at the end of the historical interest. Also in this volume is another Rookwood story "The Mystery of the Priory", taken here from the 1923 Holiday Annual. With all the Hamilton leading schools there seems to be one story which has cropped up frequently down the years for some reason or other. This one was the most reprinted of all Rookwood yarns.

It featured originally in the Boys' Friend Christmas Double Number for 1916, but there is ample evidence that it was written in 1915 and intended as that year's Christmas story. Originally it was illustrated by Macdonald, who had long gone to the war by the time that it was published in 1916. In this H.A. reprint, it was newly illustrated by Wakefield.

The Gem's last Christmas Double Number (November 1917) finds a welcome place here. "The Shadow of the Past" re-introduces Valentine Outram who starred in a couple of fine tales just as the Gem lost its old blue cover. Stories reviving old characters seldom compare well with the originals, and this is no exception, but it has its moments, and St. Jim's fans will welcome it as a period piece of immense interest. The story is illustrated by Warwick Reynolds. His cover, splendidly reproduced in colours true to the original, featured in a Mr. Buddle story as "The Boy With a Lantern" in a recent C.D. Annual.

For those who find pleasure in statistics, there is a St. Jim's Who's Who, probably compiled by Pentelow. It slips up by referring to Cousin Edith Cleveland.

Two more Magnet stories are superb. "The Worst Boy in the School", a great Greyfriars-Highcliffe yarn, set in the summer term, and "Aunt Judy at Greyfriars", a Coker tale which sparkles. Both of these are from that excellent summer of 1933.

Finally a Gem Christmas story from 1921, "Lord Eastwood's Christmas Party", a famous yarn in which the rascal Bloore is poisoning His Lordship in order to benefit from that gentleman's Will. We all enjoy a bit of unbelievable "melodrammer" at Christmas time, and to get the best from this one, you must save it till your Christmas dinner has made you happy with the world at large.

As a passing thought, in the last-mentioned Gem there is a serial instalment of a story entitled "The Queer Case of Dr. Brutell". This was actually a write-up of a Vitagraph serial, starring Antonio Moreno, playing the cinemas in those distant days. I fancy they altered the title in the Gem.

So Walk This Way for your giant Christmas stocking of fine tales plus brow-puckering bits of Companion Papers history. Your money will be well-spent.

BUNTER'S FUNNY TURN

Frank Richards
(Howard Baker: £4.50)

Here we have the last six stories of the famous Muccolini Circus series of 1936. Though, in this instance, Bunter is rather a fly in the ointment by being such a repulsive young scoundrel, with no redeeming features, the tales have all the Hamilton competence, and are packed with excitement, much good fun, and plenty of unexpected twists. Ferrers Locke makes a welcome re-appearance towards the end to clap the darbies on the villainous Italian and send him where he belongs, and Bunter's circus days come to a close. An extremely well-plotted series.

From later in the same year come two single stories to complete an attractive volume. One of these tales is "Schemers of Study 7" which stars the chums of Study 7 led by Toddy and Dutton. A delightful romp. The second "single" is "Harry Wharton's Amazing Relation" and whether or not you like this one depends on what you find funny.

HOLLYWOOD HUSSAR

John Loder
(Howard Baker Press: £4.75)

This deserves a place in the library of anyone who has affectionate memories of the great days of the cinema. John Loder was born John Lowe (he changed his name to Loder in order to avoid embarrassing his father, a General in the British army, for film-actors were then, so he assures us, not acceptable among the very best people).

Educated at Eton, from which we went to Sandhurst, Loder's earlier adventures are interesting enough, though the book does not really come alive until he embarks on a film career which began in Germany at a time when the Germans were considered to be the best film-makers in the world.

The main part of the book, which deals with Loder's film career, from the tail end of the silent era till after the second world war, is packed with interest for the film fan. The story is told with immense speed and no waste of words, and one goes on and on reading,

re-living the old days which are so well remembered.

I doubt whether Loder was ever a big star, yet he appeared in a large number of big pictures, supporting players who will never be forgotten. He tells masses of little anecdotes about the famous people he met and appeared with. Everybody remembers "The Private Life of Henry the Eighth", "Owd Bob", "Lorna Doone" and a number of Gracie Fields films including "Sing As We Go". But plenty of us have long forgotten that Loder had important heart-throb parts in those films and in others.

He passes lightly over his five marriages. In Hedy Lamarr, his third, he seems to have united with a nagger, who eventually caused him to leave Warner Brothers, with whom he thinks he might have been destined for real stardom. His account of a mild affair with Marion Davies, mistress of Randolph Hearst for a great many years, is vastly amusing and intriguing, and, in his day, he was an honoured guest at the home of Fairbanks and Pickford. He moved in the "English set", which included Ronald Colman (spelt "Coleman" in this book once or twice) and that fine American, Richard Barthelmess. Among his friends he numbered Bette Davis, supporting in several of her films, Jack Holt, P. G. Wodehouse, and crowds of others, and in later times he lived next door in Paris to the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

The many pictures in the book are unfamiliar and delightful, and an especially charming one shows the youthful Loder with Our Gracie in a scene from "Sing As We Go".

* * * * *

BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

No. 44. ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN

Every one of our feature films this term came from Warner Bros. For one thing, Warner productions were first-class; for another, the Warner dispatch department was at near-by Teddington, so that it was easier and far less expensive to collect them by car than to pay for them to come by rail. The Universal News still came by rail from G. F. D., and plenty of shorts came by rail from various other renters, with some shorter subjects from the Ministry of Information. But the features were Warner's.

There is an indication, too, of a change in policy. The double-feature programme is gradually to give way to the one big feature plus an hour or more of short subjects. For some years now, we

had played mainly double-feature programmes. This was because, with the coming of the war, we had run less programmes per term. But the one big feature, with a great variety of one and two-reelers provided more opportunity for a delightfully varied programme, and there are signs this term that we are heading in that direction.

The opening double programme comprised the delicious Constance Bennett in "Law of the Tropics" supported by Arthur Kennedy in a thriller "Strange Alibi".

Next week, another double: James Stephenson in "Shining Victory" plus Eddie Albert in "Thieves Fall Out".

Then, one of my personal all-

time favourites: Frederic March in "One Foot in Heaven" - a lovely film. For years I have been hoping to see it on BBC TV. It was, in fact, shown on ITV (in the very early days of ITV), but in those early days, ITV used to shorten their feature films unmercifully, and ruin them in the process - a practice long past, I am glad to say, though so many of the films they now show do not appeal to me or cause me to waste time on them. Somewhere in my library I have a copy of the book "One Foot in Heaven" from which the film was taken. This film stood alone, with supporting shorts.

Next: John Garfield in "East of the River" plus Marjorie Rambeau in "Tugboat Annie Sails Again". Many years earlier, in our early days with sound, we had played the first Tugboat Annie film, with the glorious Marie Dressler. I doubt whether this new Annie could have compared with the original, but I forget.

Then: Dennis Morgan, Wayne Morris, and Arthur Kennedy in a good western: "Bad Men of Missouri" plus Glenda Farrell in one of the Torchy Blane features "Torchy Gets Her Man".

Next, John Garfield and Ida Lupino in "Out of the Fog" plus Ronald Reagan in "Secret Service of the Air" (and a coloured cartoon "The Good Egg"). The following week brought Ann Dvorak in "This Was Paris" supported by Rosemary Lane in "Always a Bride".

Now another single big picture: Edward G. Robinson in "The Sea Wolf", a fine sea film, plus an hour of shorts. Followed the next week by another single big 'un: Jack Oakie and Ann Sheridan in "Navy Blues". Many years earlier we had played a silent film, William Haines in "Navy Blues" (there was a sound version of it with a lovely theme tune) but I cannot recall whether both were based on the same story. Possibly not, for the original had come from M.G.M. while this new one came from Warner.

Next an excellent comedy double: Jimmy Durante and Phil Silvers in "You're in the Army Now" plus Jeffrey Lynn in "The Body Disappears". In this programme was a coloured cartoon "Toy Trouble".

To end the term came one of the really spectacular westerns which Warner made with Errol Flynn. This was "Santa Fe Trail", and it was great entertainment. This big western stood alone with a number of shorts in support.

The Postman Called

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

Mrs. M. CADOGAN (Bromley): The September C.D. included two interesting pieces about cricket, and the game is often discussed informally by various members of the London O.B.B.C. during the 'tea interval' at our meetings. This prompts me to enquire whether cricket

and the old papers are closely linked for large numbers of collectors.

They are for me. One of my most golden childhood memories is of dividing my attention between the current MAGNET and the radio commentary on the Test Match which was in the process of being played at the Oval. This was the occasion when Len Hutton, for me always the prince of cricketers, made 364, which at that time was the record score in a Test Match.

At the time, and in retrospect, the sun seemed to shine with special intensity during that week: Howard Marshall's mellifluous voice coming over the wireless enhanced the feeling of well-being that the reading of the MAGNET always produced. My only problem was switching from one to another, so that no moment of magic would be missed.

All these years later I am wondering which MAGNET I might have been reading at the time. Can 'Danny' help me with this, I wonder? The dates in question would be 20th - 22nd - 23rd August, 1938. 23rd August especially was the really exciting day.

(Danny, alas, cannot help. But we can. The series running in the Magnet at that time was the Second South Seas collection, and the story dated 20th August, 1938, was "The Beachcomer's Secret". - Ed.)

R. J. LEWIS (Neston): I wonder if you can enlighten me over something that has, over the years, puzzled me considerably.

Why is it that Greyfriars School, when they played football or cricket matches against other schools, only had chaps from the Remove Form in the Junior Eleven, whilst the Senior side was represented, as would be expected, by both the 5th and 6th Forms?

Surely the Upper Fourth and Shell Forms, being older boys, merited selection for the Lower School, or was it that these two forms had their own fixtures under the heading of "Middle School"?

Yet if this was so it would appear that the "Middle School" fixtures would be against the same teams already played by the Greyfriars Lower School "Official Remove Only" side.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: This theme was discussed in a Let's Be Controversial article No. 201, to which we refer our reader. The article appeared in C. D. in May 1975, and was entitled "An Hour To Play and the Last Man In.")

S. R. DALTON (Leeds): I was glad to see Mr. Geal speaking up for "Bullseye" and the Thomson Papers. Certainly I remember the latter as being much more popular among boys I knew than the "Magnet" and if the Digest has a fault, it is that it seems to deal with the same papers in every issue. I cannot blame the Editor. Of course, you can only print the articles which you receive but surely there must be some readers who have collections or memories of other papers which we rarely read about but which were very popular in their day.

While it is slightly outside the normal subject of Digest, as a film collector, I very much enjoy "Biography of a Small Cinema".

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NEWS OF THE CLUBS

CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at 5 All Saints Passage on 2nd October. Members were delighted to welcome Jack Doupe, on a visit to England, back to the fold.

The Club learned with regret of the death of Frank Lay. Jack Doupe provided Bill Thurbon with material from "Chums" for a proposed article on the Sharpshooters League run by that magazine during the 1914-18 war. Bill Lofts reported that he had compiled a catalogue of the articles he had written, which now exceeded 1,000 items. Mike Rouse gave an entertaining talk on the Edwardian Theatre; he illustrated this with a contemporary volume of "Play Pictorial", a large number of theatrical postcards, and taped recordings. The point was made that the place now taken by the transistor radio had in Edwardian times been filled by the whistling of the errand boys. Edward Witten was interested by a photograph of Haydn Coffin, to whom his father, a professional singer, had been understudy.

Jack Overhill produced a copy of the book "Writers of East Anglia", just published, to which he had contributed an item. To applause, the Secretary read out the very complimentary remarks about Jack made by the editor of the book, Angus Wilson, concerning Jack's writing.

At Mike's request Jack undertook to be interviewed by a blind

writer who was touring various towns, interviewing residents with interesting stories to tell, for a series of articles to be written in brail for the blind. It was unanimously agreed by the Club members that no more suitable person than Jack to give such an interview could be found in Cambridge.

Jack opened a discussion on Cyril Rowe's article in the May "Digest" on Sexton Blake and the Law, dealing with the Hayter stories. Jack Doupe felt Cyril was wrong in equating the stories of some fifty years ago with the moral opinions of today. It was felt the tales were adventure stories, in the line of "King Solomon's Mines" and that minutiae of such things as passports and licenses did not come into consideration by the readers. Bill Thurbon pointed out that firearms legislation was much easier in the early years of the century, when Home Secretaries had the moral courage to deal with crime, and law abiding citizens would be left alone to pursue their legitimate pursuits. Next meeting at Edward Witten's, on 6th November.

It was agreed that the December meeting should be devoted to members' favourite Christmas stories.

Mrs. Thurbon was warmly thanked for her hospitality.

NORTHERN

Saturday, 8th October, 1977

The first item on our agenda was Geoffrey Wilde's playing of a recording made of Robert Robinson's radio programme of the previous Saturday evening.

On the whole, we felt, the programme was quite good, though we were puzzled and annoyed by certain of the references, particularly when it was said that members of the Clubs seemed to read nothing else but Hobby literature!

Harry Barlow then read to us his own final instalment of 'Bunter's Television Service'. The mysterious stranger is none other than our old friend (?) Soames, this time pretending to be a Scotland Yard Officer - and an invitation to go with him to the Headmaster's study convinces Wibley. Wibley, thus off-guard, is then coshed over the head and Soames runs off with what he supposes is Sir William's brief-case.

But in Quelch's study Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake watch Soames

cross the quadrangle - it had all been part of the plan!

Wibley quickly recovers - with a bit of an ache and rather more of a disappointment - he had thought there would be rather more to his act than this!

And Bunter is back again, pleased with his own role in the defence of Queen and country - and still convinced he had secured the TV part - in spite of a letter from the BBC which tells him otherwise!

After refreshments came another session of 'Call My Bluff', this time it was St. Jim's versus Rookwood. Rookwood were the winners 4 - 2.

LONDON

The highlight of the October Kingsbury meeting was undoubtedly the very fine treatise given by the Rev. Arthur Bruning. Its title was "The Passing of the School Story". At the conclusion of the treatise, he was accorded generous applause.

Millicent Lyle followed on with her contribution entitled "Midnight Dormitory Feasts" and this was right up to her previous fine essays that she has contributed from time to time.

A couple of chapters from Magnet number 1116 were read by Winifred Morss, the title of the issue being "The Mystery of Mark Linley". Mary Cadogan, after doing good business with her miscellaneous section of the club library, spoke of her visit to the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood where an exhibition of children's books and papers is being held and then went on to win the Eliminator Quiz.

Final details were given re the Diamond Jubilee of St. Frank's luncheon party which takes place on Sunday, 13th November, 12.30 p.m.

Bob and Louise Blythe were suitably thanked for their hospitality.

BENJAMIN WHITER

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SALE: Howard Baker reprint Magnets, Gems, £4.00 each. Greyfriars Prospectus, £5.00. Bunter hardbacks, £1.75 to £3.00 each. C.D. Annuals, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1976, £4.50 each. Young England, 54th vol., £2.50. Public School Stories, hardbacks, £1.25 each.

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SPECIALLY WANTED: Champion No. 103; Union Jack No. 921 and before No. 736; o/s/N, L. L. up to No. 92; Magnet Nos. between 775 and 1015; Strand volumes Nos. 33, 34, 39 and other volumes after No. 40 (not after year 1928). Please write first.

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WANTED: C. D. Annuals from 1967, also Howard Baker volumes.

LEESE, BUNNY HILL, COSTOCK, NR. LOUGHBORO.

ESPECIALLY WANTED complete and in good condition: Union Jacks 493, 512, 529, 548, 555, 594, 599, 633; SBL's 1st and 2nd series; Magnets 707, 795, 999, 1111, 1112; Gems 604, 774, 792, 801, 954, 970, 990, 1206. Will pay over the odds for these; please state price.

NORMAN SHAW, 84 BELVEDERE ROAD,
LONDON, SE19 2HZ. 01-771-9857

BOOK REVIEW by Mary Cadogan

MYSTERY! by Peter Haining

(Souvenir Press, £5.50)

The publisher's dust-jacket 'blurb' describes this book as 'a stunning pictorial fantasia'; it is certainly a lively and lavishly illustrated history of the detective fiction genre which will be appreciated by many collectors. MYSTERY!

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No. 9



spans over 125 years, from the gory and ghastly Newgate Calendars of the early nineteenth century to the 'Golden Era' of crime fiction between the two World Wars.

As far as his text is concerned, Peter Haining adds little to the information provided in previous surveys of detective stories. However, as he has happily drawn from an impressive range of magazine illustrations, his book conveys a striking sense of period atmosphere throughout. It celebrates the exploits of dozens of supersleuths and their equally compelling adversaries. As well as classic crime-fighters of the stature of Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown there are lesser known but bizarrely intriguing investigators; for instance, Ernest Bramah's blind but brilliant Max Carrados, and Baroness Orczy's 'Old Man in the Corner'. Almost everybody's favourite detective is featured. There are also plenty of the-fiendish villains whom we love to hate, like Professor Moriarty, Dr. Nikola and Dr. Fu Manchu.

Most of the book's 400 or so pictures are in black and white though there are a few pages in colour. Artists include George Cruikshank, Sidney Paget and H. M. Brock. It is satisfying to find Warwick Reynolds well represented, and described as a 'superb Victorian magazine illustrator' (although C.D. readers might take issue with Peter Haining when he writes that this artist is 'now scarcely remembered').

This review cannot convey the scope of MYSTERY! but I particularly enjoyed the sections on Lady Detectives and of course those which refer to Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee. Sexton Blake's name is linked with that of Sherlock Holmes - 'the two most famous English detectives - and perhaps the most famous in the world': however, although Holmes is rightly given several pages to himself Blake and Lee have only two or three pages between them. But their sagas are sympathetically illustrated. "Berkeley Gray's" Norman Conquest, 'the happy-go-lucky-crime-buster', also gets a mention although Peter Haining doesn't appear to connect him with Nelson Lee, or to attribute the stories of either character to E. S. Brooks.

My enjoyment of this book would have been enhanced by the inclusion of a bibliographical list of sources, and an index: but MYSTERY contains sufficient riches to make it the kind of Christmas present I'd go out to buy for a friend - and end up keeping for myself!

