

STORY PAPER  
**COLLECTORS DIGEST**

VOL. 34

NUMBER 399

MARCH 1980

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# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS DIGEST

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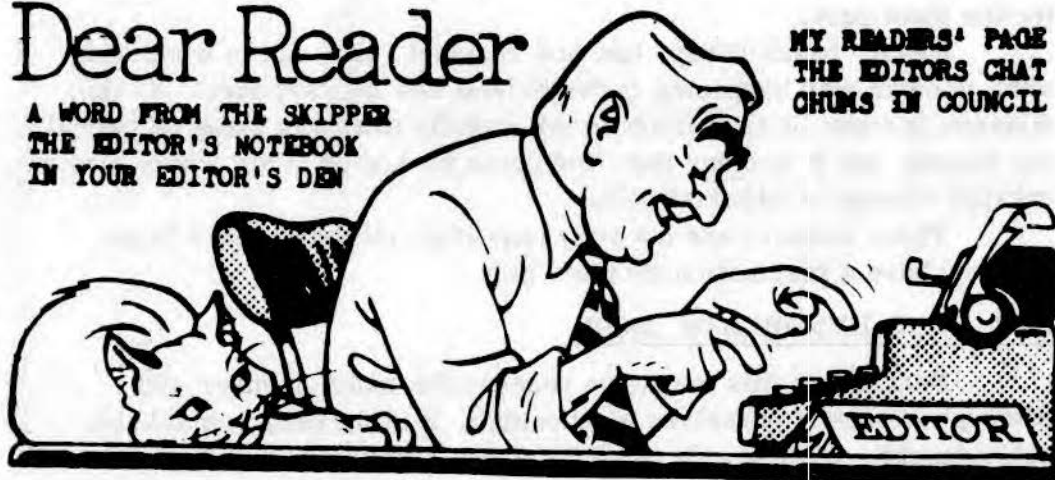
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## Dear Reader

A WORD FROM THE SKIPPER  
THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK  
IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

MY READERS' PAGE  
THE EDITORS CHAT  
CHUMS IN COUNCIL



### THE EDITORS

Just how far were the famous old papers made - or ruined - by the policy and the personality of their editors? Two old papers were certainly finished off by the activities of their new editors. These were the "Popular" and "The Boys' Friend".

The new editors were what we could call, in modern parlance, trendy. For papers which had always thrived on a certain dignity, the actual editorials struck a foreign note, with a heading like "A Chinwag With Your Editor" and an introduction of "Hiya, Folks!"

In the case of the Popular, a paper which had lived up to its title

went rapidly down hill, as the old favourites were dropped, the new series replacing them were farcical school tales or tales of adventure, while pages of comic pictures were quite out of place. One can trace the deterioration throughout the year 1930 and up till the end. As we have commented before, a partial reason for the Popular's decline was the exhausting of the old material by so much being printed, with little system, in the Schoolboys' Own Library. But editorial policy killed the Popular, just as it had done the Boys' Friend a few years earlier.

The Gem and the Magnet were lucky in their marathon runs. Though there were changes of editor, and Hinton, Pentelow and Down each left strong marks of his personality on the editorial pages, their actual policies did not differ a lot. Each was content to let well alone for the most part.

Danny, in his Diary, has just reached 1930, and is wondering what on earth was happening in the Nelson Lee Library then. At this distance in time, it is difficult to tell exactly what was going on behind the scenes, but it is clear that, for some reason or other, there was an unhappy change in editorial policy.

These matters are not very important all these years later. But they have a fascination all their own.

#### OUR FOUR-HUNDREDTH ISSUE

Next month this magazine reaches the magic number 400. Although we see it ourselves as shouldn't, it is a pretty remarkable achievement. Over nearly 34 years it has consumed countless gallons of that British energy which governments are now telling us to save. Unlike governments, C.D. has always known in which direction it was going. Being optimistic, I suppose we always felt sure that one day we would reach No. 400. And "Ain't That a Grand and Glorious Feeling" will be our signature tune next month. Unless you can think of a more appropriate one.

Down the years S.P.C.D. has also consumed millions of words, miles of typewriter ribbons, thousands of reams of paper, plus a hundredweight of postage stamps to wing it on its way. And in that time, I have worn out two typewriters. And on that journey, for all of us, glorious youth has changed to middle-age spread, though Shakespeare's

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"lean and slippered pantaloons" may still be a bit distant.

I have felt for some time that No. 400 should be one of those Grand Double Numbers which the editors used to boast up till 1917 or thereabouts. A sense of occasion calls for it.

Nevertheless, I have decided, reluctantly, against the idea. The price of C.D. has risen this month, and postage went up yet again before we could get the February issue in the bosom of the G.P.O. I feel that with everything so expensive these days, and with some item of necessity rising in cost with every day that passes, our readers have too much call on their pockets for me to add the price of a CD Double Number to the burden.

We shall, never fear, mark the occasion in a worthwhile manner. Our 400th issue will be a Specially Enlarged Number and one that you will cherish for all time.

If you have any special memories of CD, or any comments you would like to make concerning this milestone, send them along.

#### THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S CORNER

A long time ago I bemoaned the disappearance of block calendars from the market. A wonderful reader sent me one - a joyful surprise for the new year. Every day I tear off a number and read the new message. Some are amusing; some make one think.

Recently one read as follows: "Animals are such agreeable friends - they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms".

It was a quotation from George Eliot and George clearly had not a Princess Snowee in his family circle. The Princess is always asking questions. "When are you going to get my dinner?" "When are you going to put that light out? - it gets in my eyes." "When are you going to stop tapping on that machine. I want to go to sleep." And as for criticism: "It's time my blanket was changed!" "Where have you put that mouse I brought in from the fields? You haven't ----" And so on. Most of our readers who have cats or dogs will know what I mean.

Another day had the following tag: "A poor man hasn't much to do with lawyers - but some of them have had." That one's worthy of Charles Hamilton himself, with memories of Gem and Magnet lawyers

in mind.

Finally - a very, very true one: "A hundred men may make an encampment, but it takes a woman to make a home."

THE EDITOR

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# Danny's Diary

MARCH 1930

It is just fifty years since the first telephone was installed in London. My brother, Doug, read about it in the paper, and told my Dad that he thought it was high time we had a telephone in our house.

Dad put on his Mr. Quelch look and said: "Why, my son, should I go to the expense of installing a telephone? Tell me that."

Doug said: "I should be able to ring up my girl friend, Hester Tuffee, every evening. All the chaps at the tech ring up their girl friends."

Dad said: "That is the main reason why I will never install a telephone."

And that was that.

The Popular is getting a bit doubtful whether it is coming or going. St. Jim's came back, replacing Greyfriars for several weeks, and we enjoyed the series about Mr. Selby being blackmailed by a rascal named Sneath. Then St. Jim's ended and Greyfriars came back.

The series about Lovell as captain of the juniors is in the Rookwood place, and the long (by Popular standards) stories of Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake are still appearing.

But the Rio Kid is as good as ever. A marvellous series. The Kid is on Colonel Sanderson's Bar-One ranch, ever since the Kid captured Black George. The Kid is a cowpuncher on the ranch and his pal is Yuba Dick. The Kid thinks it only right that he should let the rancher know that he is the outlaw, the Rio Kid, but the rancher is kind and tells the Kid to forget it.

Then the rancher's son Frank, comes home from Montana, and the Kid recognises the son as a rascal he had met before. The son gets

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in with a gang of cattle stealers, and finally robs his father's safe. The Kid stops the son and goes to put the money back - and the rancher comes in and assumes that the Kid is robbing him. So the Kid has to leave the ranch.

A lovely series with a sad ending. The titles are "The Man from Montana", "The Scallywag of the Bar-One", "Friends or Foes?", "The Cattle-Lifters" and "The Kid's Sacrifice". All magnificent stories. Put together, they would make a lovely book.

Ken King has gone out of the Modern Boy again. Just the one tale wound up the series about Dandy Peters stealing Ken's ketch in order to get the fabulous pearl which was hidden in the hold, but which Danny, the cooky-boy found. The last story is entitled "Ken King Hits Back", and in the end Ken returns the pearl to its real owner. And now Ken King has gone again. What a shame!

In Modern Boy there is a new series by Wilfrid Tremellen called "Wings of Adventure". Two young fellows have been left a huge fortune each by their late employer, with a condition that brings them a lot more plus plenty of adventure. This is a flying series. And Alfred Edgar, who is a regular in the paper, has a motor-racing series.

We have seen some good films at our local cinemas. First there was a talkie entitled "Splinters", featuring Nelson Keys, Sydney Howard, Lew Lake, Reg Stone and Hal Jones. This is from the music hall revue of the same name with some of the same stars. We have also seen the Four Marx Brothers in "The Coconuts" and Walter Pidgeon and Mildred Harris in "Melody of Love". These last two were talkies. The silent ones, all good, have been William Haines in "Alias Jimmy Valentine"; Buster Keaton in "Spite Marriage"; and Victor McLaglen in "King of the Khyber Rifles".

At New Cross Empire we saw the new Archie Pitt revue "The Lido Follies". It was pretty good.

The first story in the Gem this week is "Gussy's 'Talkie'". Gussy gets mixed up with a film star and wants to make a film with her.

The next week it was Cardew who was "Sent to Coventry".

Then a bully named Burkett arrived at St. Jim's and I found him a bore. First tale of this series is "Cock 'O the Walk". He fights Tom

Merry and beats him. Then "The Bully of the Shell" and Burkett becomes junior captain. Must be a rum school if a new bully can become junior captain in a week. Finally, last tale of the month is "The Fall of the Tyrant". Tom Merry does exercises, gets stronger and is able to lick Burkett.

There has been a big court case on this month. A man named Sidney Fox was found guilty of murdering his 63-year old mother at a Margate hotel after taking out a short-term insurance policy on her life. It seems he strangled her and then set fire to her bedroom in the hotel. He must have been a nasty bit of work.

The Nelson Lee Library - it's gone back to its old title again since it started again at No. 1 for no reason at all - is another paper which doesn't seem to know whether it's coming or going. St. Frank's was completely destroyed, so Nelson Lee has gone back to being a detective, with a number of St. Frank's boys, including Handforth, as his "young assistants". The main story is printed in fairly small type, and there is a "full supporting programme" including 'The Laughable Larks of Tubby & Slim', another series called "Primo the Terrible" and a serial by Alfred Edgar. This month's Nelson Lee tales are "Dacca, the Devil Dwarf", "The City of Hidden Dread", "The Pit of Terror", "The Two-Headed Viper" and "The Fatal Wager".

I miss St. Frank's. But luckily there is a new St. Frank's story "Rebels of St. Frank's" in the Schoolboys' Own Library this month. The other story in the Library is a Greyfriars one "The Boy From New York". This one is a very fishy affair. In other words, Fisher T. Fish is the star. Jevver get left? I wonder what that means.

The magnificent series about the Courtfield Cracksman has finished at last in the Magnet. Ferrers Locke trapped the guilty man in the month's first story entitled "The Greyfriars Cracksman". Perhaps I ought not to mention who the cracksman turned out to be. A lady writer named Agatha Christie had a book published at Christmas entitled "The Seven Dials Mystery", and a reviewer in a newspaper printed the solution of the mystery. Everybody said it was a terrible thing to do, for it spoiled the story for anyone who was going to read it. So, in case anybody, in fifty years time, say, happens to read the Courtfield Cracksman series ("Har! Har! Har!" said my brother

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Doug who had the cheek to look over my shoulder as I was writing my Diary. He was trying to be ironic at the idea of anyone reading a 50-year old Magnet!) and in case anybody should be reading my Diary in 50-years' time (Doug doubled up with laughs at this and said "You silly little boy, who would read your Diary in 50-years' time?") I won't disclose the name of the criminal.

However, I can say that Mr. Shield's picture showed the capture of the Cracksman by Ferrers Locke, and the caption read "As the schoolmaster detective drew the muffler from the hidden face, the Head of Greyfriars uttered a cry. 'Barnes - my chauffeur!' he gasped."

I think it was very wrong of Mr. Shields to give away the ending, and of the editor to let him do it. So I shall keep the secret. I can say, though, that Mr. Steele was really Inspector Irons of Scotland Yard.

That was not quite the end of the series, though, for Bunter was still at home. Not knowing that it did not matter now if he talked of what he knew, he came back to Greyfriars secretly in a gem of a tale entitled "Billy Bunter's Come-Back".

A lovely, lovely series. Very long, of course, really running to 14 stories, but never too long for me. And the Christmas stories in it were surely the best of all time.

After that, there came two tales not by the real Frank Richards, and they were entitled "Nap of the Remove" (Nap was Gosling's nephew), and "Grease-Paint Wibley", and they were an awful anti-climax. But, then, anything would have been after the Courtfield Cracksman.

Last of the month was a tip-top Coker tale entitled "The Fool of the Fifth". Coker decides that he must play football for the school, and he tricks Potter and Greene into losing the train when the First Eleven visits Rookwood for a fixture. Coker thinks that he, Coker, will be called in to fill the breach, but his plan misfires. Luckily, Harry Wharton has gone to watch the game, and he is called in to play. A very jolly tale.

I'm still having a joyful giggle over the start of "The Boy from New York". I must write it down, so that I never forget it. It goes like this:

Study No. 7 were at tea. There were four juniors in the study - Peter Todd, and his cousin Alonzo, and Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, and Billy Bunter. Billy Bunter was

was grumbling. He generally was. The tea-table was spread frugally, for funds were low in No. 7, and Bunter, as he sat down to tea, blinked over the spread through his big spectacles, and grumbled. As Billy Bunter seldom or never made any contribution to the study funds, he really had the least right to grumble; but he did not look at it in that light.

"How many sardines, Toddy?" he asked, blinking at the dish.

"Four," said Peter Todd cheerfully. "Help yourself."

Bunter helped himself to the four sardines.

"What are you fellows going to have?" he asked.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Like Danny, loyal readers of the Nelson Lee Library may have wondered, with some reason, what the editor or the author, or both, of the old paper, were up to in 1930. The paper, for no apparent good reason, had started again at No. 1. It seemed to serve as much purpose as substituting Centigrade for Fahrenheit, at the whim of some jack-in-office. St. Frank's had been entirely destroyed, though readers were assured, amazingly enough, that it was being re-built as quickly as possible. Nelson Lee went back to his original profession of detection, with the assistance of some boys, late of St. Frank's. That, in itself, seemed unlikely. Maybe the editor, or writer, or both, remembered that Sherlock Holmes, now and then, had the assistance of some boys. Were they called the Baker Street Irregulars, or is my memory playing me tricks?

Curiouser and curiouser, some of the detective tales were published under the name of Edwy Searles Brooks, while some appeared under the name of Robert W. Comrade. But Comrade was one of Brooks's pen-names. He wrote thriller series or serials under the name in the early Gem. It really did not make sense.

As Danny mentions, one of the S.O.L's in March 1930 was "Rebels of St. Frank's", which seems to have been a new story. Therefore, it was either specially written for the S.O.L. or it was something left over when they decided to destroy the old school.

Most odd of all, there was no mention of this particular S.O.L. in the very place where one would have expected to find it - in the pages of the N.L.L.

The other S.O.L, this month, No. 119, "The Boy From New York" comprised a cut version of "Cornered", a red-Magnet tale of the early summer of 1914, followed by the entire story "Easy Terms" of a couple of months earlier in the same year. Fishy was shown in a bad light throughout, and, though the two tales blended well enough, there was just a little too much Fish about it all, )

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WANTED: Boys' Friend 3d. Library No. 48 dated 21/2/1908, "The Iron Way". Also books by John Finnemore; also by Edgar Wallace "The Cat Burglar", "Smithy & the Huns", "Sergeant Dunn C. I. D.", "For Information Received"; also "William the Lawless" by Richmal Crompton; also books by Eric Leyland; also "Chatterbox", "Newsbox" Volumes 2, 4, 5; also "Mysteries of Saddleworth" by A. Harcourt-Burage; also Boys' Friend 3d. Lib. No. 53, "Chums of the Iron Way".

ERIC CONNOLLEY

DUNSTAN LODGE, 25 PAYNE'S PITCH, CHURCHDOWN, GLOW., GL3 2NT.

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# BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

Readers of Blakiana for many years will no doubt remember the Consulting Room Chat compiled by Mr. Derek Ford. After a long gap I have received some new items from Derek and will publish some each month. These chats are very interesting and I am hoping that Derek will now continue to let me have some as often as possible. I know it is early in the year to mention the Annual for next Christmas, but I would like to receive any material you can possibly write as soon as possible, it would be nice to have some longish articles for the next issue. Of course I still need articles for Blakiana.

## CONSULTING ROOM CHAT

by Derek Ford

Back Again. As I was about to remark back in '56 when the Baker's boy came to the door, we shall now have longer to loaf over the real Sexton Blake. And we shall certainly need the time. A lifetime to read just the 1,483 case-books in the SBL alone. (Incidentally, why did the A.P. have to start "New Series" in 1925 and 1941?) Then there are 1,531 "Union Jack" and 379 "Detective Weekly". Plus, of course, numerous other papers which printed Blake's cases from 1893 onwards. So I'm afraid we are never going to see a claim in the "Guinness Book of Records" by anyone to have read all the Baker Street cases. The late Norton Price managed to collect a complete run of the SBL, but I am doubtful if he managed to read everyone of them. I make a modest claim to have read all the books in the third series of the SBL, but only because I read the majority of them bought hot from the press each month. A weekend pleasure I looked forward to at the beginning of each month for over fifteen years. In between I managed to get through cases from earlier days. But I've still many, many years to look forward to reading "new" cases like all collectors of Blakiana.

Jaws. Stanton Hope came up with an odd clue to a murder in his Chile case-book "The Sign of the Blue Triangle" (21/3) - a fragment of shark's skin found sticking to a thorny bush. It was from a small strip, wrapped round the murder knife, used by the house-boy for scraping pots and pans, and implicated him in the crime. Hope's third case-book, in 1954, also came up with another odd clue. A human skull with roughly

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engraved Chinese characters inside leading to the finding of the gold stripped from a temple dome before the Japanese army thrust through Malaya.

Two quotes of note from the first book: "Not that Miguel's conscience worried him unduly. His conscience was defunct as his veriform appendix, which had been removed years ago from among layers of fat by a Valparaiso surgeon for a handsome fee." The second: "He recognised Sexton Blake with a feeling akin to that of Scrooge confronted by the ghost".

CAN LOGANGU REALLY BE ON THE SIDE  
OF THE ENEMY?

by Ray Hopkins

Recalling the staunch friendship between Sir Richard Losely, Commissioner in Northwest Africa, and Lobangu, Chief of the Etbaia tribe, it comes as something of a shock in "The Case of the Lost Lobangu" (Union Jack 1080, 21 June, 1924) to find the friendly African siding with the enemies of the British Commissioner. The Askari, a notoriously trouble-making tribe, have obtained the services of a mysterious witch-doctor or medicine-man, one Nefari, who "was doing his best to dig up strife by preaching a doctrine of hate against the white man and counselling a campaign of wholesale murder." Nefari, it appears, is a relative of Lobangu's and the Chief of the Etbaia's object in making friendly overtures to the Askari is to talk Nefari into leaving them and joining the Etbaia. But Nefari is insane and bloodthirsty and refuses to accompany Lobangu to talk with Sir Richard. When Lobangu does not turn up for the proposed meeting, Sir Richard boards his steam launch to visit Lobangu's city "that lay south of the great swamp", only to find Lobangu missing and wandering in the Askari country. Sir Richard follows and when he does not return in the promised two days, his subordinate sends for Sexton Blake and, together with Tinker and Pedro, makes his way through the Forest of Ghosts on the trail of Sir Richard and Lobangu. Sir Richard Losely's subordinate is killed by a poisoned spear and Blake and Tinker are captured by a group of Askari warriors who club them into unconsciousness and carry them to the sacrificing stones of the Askari nation. And here, just prior to what seems to Blake must be his last moments, he sees the notorious Nefari,

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ninety years old, wrinkled and emaciated. Nefari tells the assembled Askaris that he has kept his promise to kill the white lords before their very eyes. He produces a knife from under his cloth. "For a minute the blade passed above his (Blake's) head . . . the next with a hiss, it plunged downwards." Blake flings himself from the sacrificing stone and, as he falls into unconsciousness, sees Lobangu racing toward the stone.

When Blake recovers, he finds himself, Tinker and Pedro in a native hut guarded by Lobangu. He tells Blake the Askaris plan to put him and Tinker to death on the following day, but he has broken the neck of their guard in order that they may escape. He gives them a hand-drawn map of the route Blake is to follow so that he can rescue Sir Richard. He is to be accompanied by "20 picked spears of Lord Lobangu's own bodyguard". Arrived at the hut where lies Sir Richard, Blake gazes upon the evil genius who is behind the uprising of the Askari and the introduction of Nefari. It is a German, Otto Sneider, who is sitting outside the hut with Askari warriors on both sides. By the time Blake enters the hut to release Sir Richard, the German and all the Askaris are dead. Sir Richard tells Blake that Sneider was working a rubber plantation in French Equatorial Africa which had been, prior to World War I, the German Colony of the Cameroons. Since the French took over, he had lost lots of money and intended to take revenge by causing an uprising of the Askaris against the British.

The friendly African tribes are told to arm their young men for war and converge upon the Askari led by Sir Richard Losely, Blake and Tinker. Blake deliberately kills Nefari and then sees Lobangu, who had not been with the Askari, appear from nowhere and, with a terrible cry, fall across the body of the mad witch-doctor. The war is over and the Askari are no more, and Blake realizes he has killed Lobangu's own father! Lobangu later confirms this when he has to explain to Sir Richard the reason for his inexplicable action in joining forces with the Askari. It had been to protect his insane father, and he had failed. It was he who had caused his father's madness in the first place by wandering off into the forest as a child and becoming lost for several days. The Etbaia had banished the insane Nefari to the forest where he was believed dead until his sudden reappearance years later as the witch-

doctor of the Askari. Sir Richard pardons Lobangu and allows him to return to his people without a stain on his character.

The writing style of this very dramatic story was so totally different to Cecil Hayter's "The Ghosts of Losely Hall" that curiosity made me turn to the Sexton Blake Catalogue. The difference was immediately explained because the author of this story is John Wheway that versatile writer who wrote all the Cliff House stories in the 1930's.

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# Nelson Lee Column

THAT'S MY BROOKS!

by William Lister

Time was when there was a soldier Housemaster at St. Frank's in charge of the Monk's House section. Of course, there would be; seeing it was January 1919 and we had just said goodbye to World War 1.

A certain Colonel Clinton, D.S.O., arrived at the old school, to make his presence felt. Not that I knew much about it as I was but seven at the time. In fact I have only just caught up on it, and even that only through a reading glass. Talk about "Alice through the Looking-Glass" I wouldn't see much without looking through a reading glass.

Our Clinton was a right old shiner. Your first sight of him comes from the cover, as he drills the boys in the schoolyard; he bawls his lungs out after the manner of Mr. Windsor Davies, the sergeant of "Some Like it Hot" of T.V. fame.

Colonel Clinton's dossier reveals the following:- Fighting in France for two years; rose from Lieutenant to Colonel in no time; rescued a private for which he received a D.S.O.; invalided home. Ramrod back; red face; iron-grey moustache sticking in tufts from side of face.

Get the picture? You've all met him, whether it was in 1914-1918 or 1939-1945 and most of you didn't like him. It looks as if the same applied to Edwy Searles Brooks. It wasn't long before the St. Frank's boys didn't like him either, but then his sort have always been around and are still with us according to a recent trial reported in the

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national press.

Our Clinton would be just the sort of character Edwy was looking for, if you will allow me to explain. Pick up any book on short-story writing or novel-writing and you are urged to have "conflict". So, how does one create conflict? How do you work out a plot?

Well! here's Mr. Brooks at the close of one St. Frank's series and another due to begin. St. Frank's is before him, everything is quiet, everything running smoothly; just as well run as a public school should be. But there's no story in that. I can almost hear Mr. Brooks brain ticking over, (I could do with an awkward character to dump on St. Frank's; one likely to stir up trouble). Being around 1918-1919 there would be plenty of the Colonel Clinton type around. "Just the job" thinks Mr. Brooks and so Colonel Clinton is born, the scourge of St. Frank's.

Route marches, solitary confinement, confined to barracks, severe punishments were the order of the day. All in frosty, snow bound weather.

I have been told that this kind of chap usually got shot in the back by his own men so it was no surprise to me that poor old Clinton was murdered.

So you see, from the injection of one objectionable character into St. Frank's, we eventually arrive at the headlines "Murder at St. Frank's". "Dr. Stafford, Headmaster, arrested." "Colonel Clinton dead."

After a terrible row the night before, Colonel Clinton is found dead. Dr. Stafford's blood-stained slippers and blood-stained handkerchief (on which the police claim Stafford wiped the blood from his hands) and a blood-stained poker in the Doctor's study. They have detained the headmaster of this well-known school.

So we have come a long way from that nice well-run college that Mr. Brooks started with, all because of one man who created conflict.

To close, I am known as an Edwy Searles Brooks fan. Indeed I am; but I am not naive. Everything that Brooks wrote was not top-class, sometimes it was sub-standard, but when he did rise to the occasion he's hard to beat. Take this series o. s. 187-194, as an illustration for the benefit of those not familiar with Edwy Searles Brooks, (and being 1919

it would be his early days) before he developed.

"The Soldier Housemaster", No. 187 o. s.

"The Freak of St. Frank's", No. 188 o. s.

"Discipline Let Loose", No. 189 o. s.

"Under the Heel", No. 190 o. s.

"Dr. Stafford's Ordeal", No. 191 o. s.

Here are the first five of the series, they are readable, mildly interesting; but then we move into the last three, and you can hold on to your hats and your seats;

"Who Killed the Colonel?", No. 192 o. s.

"The Schoolboy Sleuth", No. 193 o. s.

"The Colonel's Secret", No. 194 o. s.

Sit back and enjoy them and there's a tremendous twist at the finish. That's my Brooks!

#### A FEW MORE ODDS AND ENDS

by C. H. Churchill

In the February C.D. Jim Cook in his "Letter from St. Frank's" remarks that he has no information to offer regarding Vera Zingrave, stepdaughter of the infamous Professor of that ilk. I would like to say that the last time she was introduced into a story by E.S.B. was, as far as I am aware, in No. 78 old series "A Christmas of Peril" the first double number of the Lee. This was after the Green Triangle series ended with the Professor presumed dead. I had an article on this story in the December C.D. 1977. Vera Zingrave was then married to Douglas Clifford who had helped Lee against the Green Triangle. They were living in a large house called "The Elms" somewhere in Derbyshire. I do not think they were ever mentioned in the Lee again.

The remarks in the C.D. lately about errors in print interested me as I spent some years in the printing trade. Our firm made few mistakes as we had a good reader. Over the years a few did creep in and when they did they were almost always absolutely stupid and one could never understand how they could happen. What does irritate me, however, is silly mistakes such as in Detective Weekly No. 54, "The Riddle of the Five Strange Guests" by E.S.B. It is definitely by him and says so on the title page. On page 20 at the bottom "continued on page 24". When we turn to this page we find the story continued half

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way down with the remark "The Riddle of the Five Strange Guests" by Gilbert Chester. The top half of page 24 contains an advert for the coming weeks story which is by Chester. Apparently whoever set up the page must have become bemused, and certainly did not think what they were doing.

Some errors crept into the Lee but these were mostly in the adverts for the next week's story. When this arrived it bore a different title to that shewn the previous week. Of course these might not be errors but a change of mind by the Editor at the last moment.

Referring again to proof reading, if one scans the daily press (also our local evening one) it would appear that today there are no proof readers with all the mistakes, lines missed out and lines transposed. Progress I presume.

There were some odd things about the Lee covers at times. The most famous case being No. 354 "The Amazing Inheritance". On the cover Nipper & Co. are shewn dressed in Etons whereas in the story it definitely says they were dressed in Cadet uniform. Oh well!!

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### TWO MORE "OLD BOYS" PASS ON

We deeply regret to record the death of Mr. Max Lyne, who was a reader of this magazine for many years. Mr. Lyne, a brilliant classical scholar, was at one time the editor of the Latin magazine "Acta Diurna", and on one occasion published a Greyfriars story, in Latin, from the pen of Charles Hamilton. Mr. Lyne admired greatly the knowledge of Latin, largely self-taught, which Hamilton had. Max Lyne was, before retirement, a master at Blackpool Grammar School, and in recent years has lived in the Lake District. Max was a very old friend, long before C.D. days, and we shall miss his interesting letters.

He leaves a widow and a son, to whom we extend our sympathy.

We are also sad to record the death of Mr. A. Fenner of Highams Park, E.4, who was a loyal reader of the Digest from its very early days.

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WANTED: The following monthly C.D's to complete collection - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 20, 22, 24, 26, 48, 83, 134, 384. Also the Sexton Blake Catalogue. Can anybody help?

H. PEMBERTON, 63A PARKEND ROAD  
NEWALL GREEN, MANCHESTER, M28 8QP.

\* \* \* \* \*

The question of the friendship between Tom Merry and Reginald Talbot has again arisen in the recent Collectors' Digest Annual, a situation which has, for the past few years, intrigued me greatly. I say for the past few years, as it was only during the 1970's that I became aware that so much interest in the Magnet, the Gem and the other papers of our youth, still existed. Therefore, as I had not even read a Gem story since those far off days, I may be at a disadvantage in expressing my sentiments over Talbot of St. Jim's.

When I first read the Gem, way back in the 1920's, Talbot, although mentioned quite often, did not appear to be one of the leading characters, and as I was just becoming acquainted with Tom Merry and Co., I paid little attention to him, little realising what a furore he had caused a decade before. Then, (and I hope I am correct in this recollection, as I have not seen a copy of the book since), from a friend at school, I borrowed a copy of the Holiday Annual of 1922(?), in which a story concerning Talbot's early days at St. Jim's was published, and he became my favourite character immediately. However, there was little evidence in the Gems of the 1920's, that Tom Merry and Talbot were supposedly close friends, apart maybe from the 1927 series featuring Talbot and Crooke. Sadly, by the time the early Talbot stories were reprinted in the Gems of the 1930's, I had passed on to other magazines.

Since becoming aware of this continued interest by so many people in the Old Books, I have, during the past four or five years, read the stories of the arrival of Talbot at St. Jim's, and the subsequent stories that appeared during the 1914-20 period . . . and what marvellous stories they were, Talbot being an absolutely superb character. Allowing for all the improbabilities, such as a boy of fifteen being the leader of a gang of crooks, and although apparently spending a considerable amount of time in the precincts of Angel Alley, managed to be splendidly educated, a first-class cricketer (and footballer), and an excellent pianist. Right from the beginning, his personality must have been quite different from the usual run of St. Jim's characters, and Tom Merry and Talbot certainly became close friends in those early stories.

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Tom proved his friendship in that marvellous story "Cast Out From the School", Gem No. 362 (with that extremely poignant cover, referred to by Roger Jenkins, of Talbot walking away from the school, leaving Tom Merry in great distress), and in the following story, "Loyal to the Last", when the Terrible Three find the starving Talbot on the London Embankment. These were extremely moving stories, and how the young readers of the Great War period felt about such stories, I cannot imagine.

But in the very next issue of the Gem, with Talbot back at St. Jim's, Tom Merry almost turns against him, with Talbot saying, "I'm not going to quarrel with you Tom, you've been too good a friend to me for that. But if you no longer have faith in me, you can drop my friendship if you like, and have nothing more to do with me".

If, at any time, the Terrible Three had considered becoming the Terrible Four, Talbot would have been the ideal fourth member, and I, for one, am glad he remained at St. Jim's. He never wished to be Captain of the Shell, and he never turned against any of his friends. The Terrible Three could fall out, Blake & Co. could have misunderstandings, Levison and Clive could doubt Cardew, Clive and Cardew could doubt Levison, but Reginald Talbot, though he was often condemned, remained an upright, brilliant character.

Talbot became a loner, having to share a study with the boring Gore and Skimpole, and even in holiday periods, he seldom, or ever, spent a vacation with Tom Merry, Manners and Lowther. Blake & Co. always joined the Terrible Three, so thinking back, was Tom Merry's friendship with Talbot so deep after all?

Luckily, Talbot remained an individual. Somehow he did not belong to Charles Hamilton, or even Frank Richards. He was essentially the inspiration of Martin Clifford.

\* \* \* \* \*  
FOR SALE: Tiger Tim's Annual 1926; also Chatterbox 1907, very good condition. Many other Annuals: Tiny Tots; Bobby Bear; Leading Strings; Mickey Mouse; Felix. About 80 Picture Post magazine of late 30's and early 1940's; 15 Rupert Annuals. Have 100 Magnets and Gems to sell or exchange. Sunny Stories by E. Blyton 1950's, American Eagles Comic 1945. Will exchange for Wizards.

WATON, "OLYMPUS", SANDFORD MILL RD., CHELMSFORD, ESSEX.

TEA IN THE HALL

by W. O. G. Lofts

Recently a Magnet enthusiast wrote and asked me if I could explain more about the Greyfriars Tea in the Hall. How, for instance, did the catering staff know exactly what numbers of boys to provide for? According to the tales very few boys did attend the unappetising afternoon meal, and it did seem that gallons of tea and piles of bread must have been thrown away daily. Well my answer to this sort of question is like many others of this nature. Frank Richards always freely admitted that he was spartan in his description of boys and places. He thought quite rightly that it was the story he was writing, and not descriptive essays on the functions that existed in the old school. If one was so inclined, one could point out dozens of such inconsistencies, or lack of reasonable explanations. For instance it would have needed a staff of at least 30 to run the school on the domestic side, yet only half a dozen were ever named. One of the duties of Trotter, the Greyfriars page, was to clean the shoes. What! nearly 300 pairs! He would be doing nothing else all day. The Invisible Man must also have cleaned up the horrible mess in the ink splashed wrecked ragged studies, as they appeared shortly afterwards as new. Let us be thankful that the author did concentrate on the delightful stories, that we were able to enjoy to the full in the dear old Magnet.

But to return to the Tea in the Hall. According to the rules of the school, boys from only the Third Form upwards were allowed to have tea in their studies. One could safely then say that the First Form (yes, Frank Richards did mention this in Magnets 241 & 291), Second Form, and most of the Third were regular attenders which made at least 80 boys. With a smattering of the poorer boys of the Remove, including Fisher T. Fish, who thought that as the Tea was included in the school fees he might as well eat it, even though it was referred to as 'Doorsteps' and 'Dishwater'. So all in all they probably catered for an average of a 100 boys each tea time. The authorities claimed that the meal was wholesome, and exactly what a growing boy should have. Far better than the cream cakes and chocolate eclairs devoured in the study feeds. So who is to say who was right?

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## BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

### No. 72. THE BARKLEYS OF BROADWAY

This time it was nearly half-term before the curtains of the Small Cinema parted for the first programme of the term.

Times were changing. Even films were changing. And often, not for the better. Television was now in almost every home. I delayed over booking new shows for the Small Cinema. I asked myself whether it was worth while. All over the country cinemas were closing down. The Small Cinema had a good while to run yet, but always, from now on, it was to be a good many weeks into a term before the programmes started.

The first film of the term came from M.G.M., and it was a big one. It was "King Solomon's Mines" starring Stewart Granger and Deborah Kerr, in Technicolor. It was not a favourite of mine, but, undoubtedly, it was a splendid one for a school cinema. Rather improbably, it did very big business in the commercial cinemas, too. Granger was another of the later stars in the declining days of the cinema, and he was very popular for a time. The story-line of the film was not strong, but visually it was magnificent, and it had a good deal of educational worth.

In the same bill was a coloured cartoon "Holiday for Shoestrings".

Next week brought another big one, this time from Warner's. This was James Cagney and Virginia Mayo in "White Heat". It was, without much doubt, Cagney's most violent film, but Cagney gave a searing performance, and

the story was tense and exciting. It was a great hit in the Small Cinema. A coloured Porky cartoon was "Little Orphan Airedale", and the supporting bill also had a Joe McDoakes comedy novelty "So You Want a Raise".

The following week brought the longest film of the term. It came from M.G.M. and was "Command Decision". It starred Clark Gable, Walter Pidgeon and Van Johnson, but there was an immense cast of famous male names. I should think that every male star on the M.G.M. payroll had a part in it. A war picture, from the point of view of the Generals, it does not linger in my memory. In the same show was a colour cartoon "One Ham's Family".

Next, "Stage Fright" from Warner Bros., starring Marlene Dietrich, Richard Todd and Jane Wyman. A Hitchcock film, it lacked the eerie charm of many of his films, I seem to recall, but it had its moments. Made in England, it had a number of well-known British players in the supporting cast. In the supporting bill was a Barney Bear colour cartoon "The Bee-Develled Bruin".

Next, from Warner Bros., Robert Montgomery and Patricia Cutts in "Your Witness". Made in England, it was, I seem to recall, a fairly interesting story of an American soldier accused of murder in England, and an American lawyer coming over the pond to defend him. Montgomery, after spending years at M.G.M., had switched to Warner's, and

was well past his peak. This may have been his last film, though I am only guessing. Patricia Cutts was an English actress who, I believe, later changed her name to something more glamorous, though I forget what it was.

A colourful cartoon was "For Scent-imental Reasons" and a Pete Smith novelty was "What I want Next".

The following week, from Warner's, brought Humphrey Bogart in "Chain Lightning". I can't remember a thing about it, which may or may not be a measure of its worth, but I daresay it went down well enough in its day. A big supporting bill included a colour cartoon "Wags to Riches" and a coloured Sport Parade "Action in Sport".

The term's shows ended with Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in "The Barkleys of Broadway" from M.G.M., in Technicolor. Ginger had visited the Small Cinema before, notably many years earlier in the lovely musical "Fifty Million Sweethearts", while Fred had been along a few years before in the pleasant musical "Easter Parade" with Judy Garland.

It was some ten years since Ginger and Fred had made their popular dancing films together, though we had never played them, as they were released by Radio, and, though we played a few Radio films earlier on, we had possibly ceased doing so by the time of Ginger and Fred. I fancy the Barkleys was quite a good film, though some critics slated it at the time. It had been intended, I

think, as a vehicle for Judy Garland, but she was then engaged on one of her frequent fits of temperament, so Ginger Rogers was called in, though it was a long time since she had made a musical. It was delightful to see them together again.

The supporting bill included that term's only Tom & Jerry coloured cartoon "Jerry's Cousin" and a pleasant musical half-hour in colour entitled "Songs of All Nations".

That vacation we had a club meeting, probably at Kingston. After the meeting, I invited any guest who felt like it to come to the Small Cinema and see a short programme of films, and I expect that nearly everybody did so. On that occasion, it was a show of about 40 minutes, and consisted of one of those delightful Mack Sennett pot-pourris from Warner's entitled "Once Over Lightly", plus a Tweety Pie colour cartoon "Bad Old Putty Tat", an Inki colour cartoon, "Inki at the Circus" and another colour cartoon "Finn'n Catty". The whole show, on that occasion, came from Warner Bros. The date: 19th August, 1951.

(And when C.D. started, 400 issues back, the Small Cinema was playing "Anchors Aweigh" starring Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra.)

(ANOTHER ARTICLE  
IN THIS SERIES  
NEXT MONTH)

\* \* \* \* \*  
STOLEN FROM O.B.B.C. BORROWER - Gems Nos. 1345, 1348; N. Lee's 493, 495-496;  
SBL's (2nd series) Nos. 414, 684, 710, 744. URGENTLY NEED GOOD CLEAN REPLACEMENTS.  
WRITE FIRST. BILL BRADFORD, 5 QUEEN ANNE'S GROVE  
EALING, LONDON, W.5, 3XP.

THE WOLF OF WOTSIT?

by R. Hibbert

For what it's worth - not a lot - Tom Hallas and I always pronounced it Ka as in K, K, K, Katie and bul as in John Bull. K-bul with rather more stress on the second syllable than on the first.

Kabul, as Tom and I knew - back in the thirties - was somewhere near the Khyber Pass. We imagined the Khyber Pass to be something like the Winnats Pass near Castleton, in Derbyshire. Like the Winnats but more so. A pass is a pass is a pass was the way we saw it. But Kabul was probably not a bit like Castleton. We understood that a lot of dried mud went into the architecture of Kabul.

Kabul, the Khyber Pass, the Himalayas were places where Bill Samson busied himself. We read about his exploits in 'The Adventure'. He was a British army officer with very little regard for regimentation. A military misfit, he was even more of a loner than Lawrence of Arabia. His only confidant was a stunted hillman called Chung who delighted in clobbering Samson's enemies - who were the enemies of the Raj - with a dilapidated cricket bat.

Men in London clubs, Indian Army messes and Afghan bazaars referred to Samson - respectfully - as the Wolf of Kabul. So did boys in terraced houses in Northern mill towns.

Christmas, 1979 the Russians invaded Afghanistan and took Kabul. When the B. B. C. reported the affair it got into a lot of trouble. Not as to whether it got its facts right or wrong. No, the B. B. C. was hauled over the coals for the way it pronounced Kabul. No two announcers or reporters said it alike. According to them Bill Samson could have been called

The Wolf of Ko-bul  
The Wolf of Kobble  
The Wolf of Kaw-bul  
The Wolf of Kaa-bul

and different people put the stress on either the first or second syllable as they saw fit. Worriers - including a knowledgeable memsahib - wrote up to the B. B. C. about it and got their views aired on Radio 4's news programme 'P.M.' and the Sunday lunchtime programme 'Feedback'. Everybody knew the right pronunciation and poured scorn on all other pronunciations. Top people wrote to 'The Times' about it so it

was a pretty serious matter.

If Bill Samson himself wrote up to 'P.M.' I missed it when his letter was read out. No Afghan phoned in, but if one foreigner's just blown up your part of the old home town you're hardly likely to worry about what another foreigner calls it. In any case a language expert on 'Feedback' assured us that Kabul could be pronounced one way at one end of a sentence and another way at the other end of the sentence. There seems to be no answer to that.

Tom Hallas and I learnt quite a few words from the Wolf of Kabul - jingal for one, poshteen for another one, alkhak for another, tulwar for another and chupli for yet another. We used to drop these bits of Pushtu, Hindi and Persian into what passed for conversation at the top end of Syddal Street and no-one corrected our pronunciation. But nobody paid much attention to us either.

Pity Bill Samson retired, because he had that part of the world a lot better organised than it is now, pity Chung hung up the skull-cracking Clicky-ba. Pity Afghanistan didn't stay a far-off dream place in a boys' paper. I don't like realism in fiction and I like it a lot less in real life.

\* \* \* \* \*

ANOTHER HAMILTON MUSEUM

Another Hamilton museum has come into existence, this time at the home of Mr. R. F. Acraman at Ruislip, Middlesex. The original Hamilton museum, at Maidstone, under the control of Mr. John Wernham, is still going strong, of course.

Miss Hood, housekeeper to the famous author for many years, has now retired, and the house "Rose Lawn" has been on the market and may now have a new owner. Mr. Acraman, with a number of trustees, acquired many interesting items which formerly belonged to Charles Hamilton, including a couple of his typewriters (one of them his beloved old Remington); his typing-desk and stool; his tobacco jar; a large Bible presented to him by Clive Fenn; his large reference library; volumes of Greyfriars stories written in Braille; and many other interesting pieces too lengthy to list here.

Anyone wishing to view the latest museum should contact Mr. Acraman by telephone (Ruislip 31025) well in advance and make an appointment. A viewing fee is charged, and will be passed on to Miss Hood.

\* \* \* \* \*

WANTED: Magnets & Gems. Also 1920 Greyfriars Holiday Annual. Can offer 1941 in exchange. D. WRIGHT, 13 EAST LANE, SANDIWAY, NORTHWICH, CHESHIRE. (0606-882397)



# News of The Old Boys Book Clubs

## MIDLAND

Meeting 26th January, 1980

This was a cheerful meeting and we enjoyed ourselves very much.

Our usual feature - the Anniversary number, was on show. It was Gem 103 dated 29th January, 1910, and 70 years old to the day.

We were saddened to hear of the sudden death of a one-time member of our club, Warwick Selford, who was a very young man and we all stood in silence as a token of respect for two minutes.

Several lively discussions took place. The geography of the Greyfriars scene was often a puzzle, for Charles Hamilton was inconsistent about it but members agreed that such solecisms were forgotten in an enthralling story.

Regarding the celebration of the 400th issue of the Collectors' Digest, Tom Porter, who has them all, said that in addition to the 400 usual numbers there was in the early days a special edition called 3A. This was sent out by Herbert Leckenby to warn readers of frauds among the dealers of the period.

Coffee and chocolate cakes provided by Vince Loveday were taken as refreshments and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

We wished to place on record our appreciation to Pat Hughes, Stan Knight and Joe Marston for their generous donations to our club. Joe Marston had raised the grand sum of £157.50 on the books of the late John Tomlinson which had duly been passed on to his widow.

A reading by your correspondent from Billy Bunter's Tramp, a recent Howard Baker issue, finished off an enjoyable evening.

We meet again on the 26th of February, 1980.

JACK BELLFIELD - Correspondent.

## CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at the home of Adrian Perkins on Sunday, 3rd February. Mr. R. W. Bayliss, Secretary of the forthcoming Eagle Convention was a welcome guest.

Mike Rouse passed round a number of new items of publications, and also more albums of seaside photographs, and reported on progress with his forthcoming book on East Anglian seaside resorts.

Arrangements were made for forthcoming meetings, alterations to the usual dates being made to avoid clashes with Easter and the May Bank holiday. The Club will now meet on 2 March (host Bill Thurbon), 30 March (host Jack Overhill) and 27 April (when Vic Hearn with host the A.G.M.).

Adrian and Roger Bayliss, explained the arrangements for the Eagle Conference. Mention of "The Eagle" set members' memories working on other comics of their youth, and a number of these, ranging over most of the first half of the present century were recalled. Bill Thurbon then gave the answers to his "just for fun" Christmas Quiz; the highest scores being made by Jack Overhill and Mike Rouse. After enjoying Mrs. Perkins' tea, Jack Overhill talked on piracy. He covered a wide range, from about 1200 B.C. to the 17th Century. From the "People of the Sea" who Ramese III defeated, to Blackbeard, Captain Kidd, Morgan and Captain Ward, the renegade who taught the Barbary pirates to use square rigged ships, covering the Elizabethan ventures of Drake, Hawkins and others. He also recalled Pompey the Great's war against the pirates of the ancient world, and Julius Caesar's revenge on the pirates who held him to ransom. Jack had been particularly interested in the rulers and financiers behind many piratical expeditions. In the discussion which followed reference was made to the stories of Jeffrey Farnol and Sabatini, to S. Walkey's tales in "Chums", to the "Iron Pirate" and "Captain Black" by Max Pemberton, and, of course, "Treasure Island".

Warm thanks were expressed to Adrian and Mrs. Perkins for their hospitality.

### LONDON

The thirty-second A.G.M. took place at Josie Packman's East Dulwich home, the same venue where the inaugural meeting of the club took place in 1948.

Bill Bradford was elected Chairman for 1980 and the rest of the officers of the club were re-elected en bloc.

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Pride of place as regards the entertainment side of the gathering was Josie's estimable treatise on the Three Musketeers, not Dumas' immortal three but that trio of desperadoes that were featured from time to time in the pages of both the Union Jack and the Sexton Blake Library. Josie read extracts about these crooks from articles of hers that have appeared in the Collectors' Digest.

Bob Blythe's reading from an issue of the Nelson Lee Library was "The Affair of the Professor's Monoplane", a thrilling story about Trackett Grim and Splinter. Bob also read extracts from February 1963 newsletter which was about the A.G.M. that was held at Putney.

The Greyfriars item this month was a Rhyming Quiz conducted by Roger Jenkins. Eric Lawrence and Laurie Sutton were the joint winners. Votes of thanks were accorded to Josie for her hospitality and to the officers for their good work during 1979.

Next meeting at the Townswomen's Guild, 342 Hoe Street, Walthamstow E.17, on Sunday, 9th.

BENJAMIN WHITER

### NORTHERN

#### Meeting held 9th February, 1980

All the faithful were in attendance on a mild evening, and ready to entertain thoughts of spring. Mollie, indeed, is due to wing for holiday climes in the next few weeks, and some of our discussion time revolved round future plans - note, please, no library session, therefore, next meeting.

Darrell Swift had a recording of Greyfriars through the eyes (or ears) of New Zealand Radio. Our reactions could fairly be described as mixed; some were in fact pretty derisive, but we acknowledged that the programme did at least go to authentic original sources, which all too many 'entertainers' these days fail, through ignorance or indifference, to do. We had before us some recent newspaper cuttings which offered fresh examples of this sadly familiar treatment of the world's best-loved but - alas! - often scantily-respected school.

After refreshments, a letter-grid quiz. Bill Williamson romped into an early lead, but the gap was later closed. One of his rivals was Harry Barlow, who claimed the event to be - in the words of one of the

answers - Unparalleled, Unprecedented!  
Next meeting, Saturday, 8th March.

JOHNNY BULL

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# The Postman Called

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

BILL LOFTS (London): In answer to Gordon Hudson's query on the Union Jack Mystery - I think it was just a case of the serial end instalment being squeezed out because of adverts finally taking priority. The serial certainly continued the following week, and right up to No. 900. Many strange things like this have been found in boys' papers in the past, and commented on in the C.D. This serial was republished in Boys' Friend Library, 1st series, No. 556 - and it is sad to note that the author Walter Edwards (Walter Shute) ended up his days driving a taxi to make a living. So rewards for some were poor in boys' fiction writing.

E. W. COX (Southampton): The reference to the film 'Words and Music' in the February 'Biography of a Small Cinema' prompts me to write in protest. Certainly, it was in no way a great MGM musical, but was one of the many biopics turned out by the major studios during the late 'forties, on composers and entertainers, in which a collection of popular songs could be performed by the leading stars of that time. This particular film was as inaccurate as the others, but did have Metro's top stars to put over the '... any amount of forgettable songs' by '... an American song-writing team'.

The song writers were Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart - composer and lyricist who collaborated for over twenty-three years, and together turned out some 480 popular songs, which many consider to be the greatest this century.

'Words and Music' used only a few; such trifles as 'The Blue Room', 'Manhattan', 'Johnny One-Note', 'Mountain Greenery', 'A Small Hotel', 'I Wish I were In Love Again', 'Blue Moon', 'On Your Toes', 'This Can's be Love', 'Thou Swell', 'Where's that Rainbow?', 'The Lady is a Tramp', 'Where or When', and 'Slaughter on 10th avenue'. Not featured were such equally forgettable songs as 'Dancing

on the Ceiling', 'You took Advantage of Me', 'A Ship without a Sail', 'Little Girl Blue', 'It never entered my Mind', 'My Heart stood Still', 'My Funny Valentine', 'Glad to be Unhappy' and 'Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered'. After Larry Hart died in 1943, Rodgers teamed up with a Mr. Hammerstein, and during the next seventeen years they turned out several songs, which the author no doubt has forgotten.

Richard Rodgers died on 31st December, 1979, and his passing was mourned by millions. Luckily his music will live, and the lyrics by Lorenz Hart will delight lovers of wit and audacity as they have continued to do over the past thirty-seven years.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: The writer of our Small Cinema articles does not use reference books. He has nothing before him but his old booking-sheets, and then writes from memory as he looks back over the years. He recalled that "Words & Music" was biographical (or a 'biopic' as modern critics say in their new jargon which grates on some of our nerves) but, shamefully enough, did not remember much more about it.)

T. KEEN (Thames ditton): How very strange, the February issue of the C.D., arrived a couple of days ago, and reading through Danny's Diary, Joan Crawford's film "Our Dancing Daughters" is mentioned as being another very good silent film - the odd bit being, that I had seen the film the previous evening at the National Film Theatre. Joan Crawford was an absolute delight.

Dare I carry on further from Ronnie Hunter's letter regarding the old song "A Cottage for Sale"? I, also have an old 78 recording of this song, beautifully sung by Gracie Fields, the exact date of recording being 22nd May, 1930. Gracie's version was backed by "Cryin' For the Carolines".

F. R. LOWE (Derby): With reference to Ronnie Hunter's note in "The Postman Called", Jan. C.D., about Maurice Elwin, I too still have a zonophone record, in good condition, of this singer - stated on it to be a baritone - which I purchased for 1/6 in 1929, and which I have treasured ever since, although now I have no gramophone on which to play it.

The titles on mine are "I Surrender Dear" and on the reverse side "Rocky Mountain Lullaby", also of Elwin.

LAURIE SUTTON (Orpington): In his C.D. Annual article on Cliff House and Morcove, I am afraid that Tommy Keen is in error in attributing Phyllis Howell, along with Philippa Derwent, to J. N. Pentelow. The Derwents were, indeed, Pentelow characters, but Phyllis and Archie Howell were the creations of G. R. Samways.

Incidentally, "The Feud With Cliff House", (1925) was almost certainly written by Samways - certainly not by Hamilton!

LEN WORMULL (Romford): I was so sorry to hear of the death of Ross Story, a lady with whom I made contact only by telephone. She seemed such a warm and friendly person. Long-term readers of C.D. will recall her nicely-balanced articles on St. Frank's, and the time she "stuck her neck out" by declaring E. S. Brooks to be a better writer than Charles Hamilton. On a more personal level, I particularly enjoyed her spirited defence of Handforth, in reply to a criticism of mine. By an odd coincidence, only the other day I picked up a paperback Western, called "Raiders Of Wyoming" by Ros (sic) Story. Assuming it to be our own Ross, I read on. Briefly, the story relates how an outlaw-turned-lawman, Gregory Cord, and now operating with the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, joins up with a notorious gang of bank robbers to find their hiding place of a quarter million dollars. I enjoyed it so much that I looked for other titles from the same pen, without success. But I did make a surprising discovery. The same character (Gregory Cord) and Pinkerton Agency turned up again in "Death Waits In Tucson" by Desmond Reid. The writing style bore a marked similarity to the first.

I dimly recall Jack Holt in "Submarine", mentioned by Danny, and believe his partner was Ralph Graves. They made several films together - "Dirigible" was one of theirs, I think. I must congratulate you on the excellence of the Annual this year, which truly deserves a place among the best ever published. The announced price increase is still a modest one by today's standards, and unlike most products these days the quality of C.D. never deteriorates. Most National newspapers now carry so many advertisements that the term Newspaper has become little more than a misnomer. And talking of inflation, I have just seen this notice in a Baker's shop window: "Hot cross buns - only 7½p each".

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One a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns. What a laugh!

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Ross Story wrote a "Desmond Reid" Blake story.)

JAMES HODGE (Bristol): I MUST recommend a book to you, one which I am currently reading and one which I am sure you, too, would enjoy. It is entitled "Chelsea Child", written by Rose Gamble, and published 1979 by BBC Publications at £5.25. I borrowed it from the Public Library. It is concerned with the child of a poor family growing up in the 1920's and '30s and is a lovely and movingly written autobiography, the reading of it moving one to alternate laughter and tears. Also, it reminds one that not only have the times changed but the people, we, us, have changed also. The courage and integrity that shines through the deprivation in the pages of this book, the self reliance and the willingness of the poor to help the poor in the face of unheeding Government and the iniquitous Means Test . . . one asks, what has happened to the sort of people we once were, what have we done to our moral fibre, our 'guts' as a people and a Nation?

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WANTED: 'Baker' Specials; India Series, Dick the Penman, The Treasure Hunters, Loder - Captain, Toff of St. Jim's. Will purchase or have some Greyfriars Press volumes for exchange including G.H.A. 1974 and other O/P volumes.

ANDREWS, 80 GREENWOOD AVENUE

LAVERSTOCK, SALISBURY, WILTS.

\* \* \* \* \*

FOR SALE: 618 Beezer Comics, mint condition, £100.00. 136 Huckleberry Hound Comics, mint condition, £20.00. Would like buyer to collect if possible; very bulky to post.

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STOCKPORT, CHESHIRE (061-483-7627)

\* \* \* \* \*

WANTED: Boys' Papers, Comics, Libraries and Annuals, large and small quantities.

MARRIOTT, 27 GREENVIEW DRIVE, NORTHAMPTON, Tel. 711874

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Next Month: Our **SPECIALLY ENLARGED** 400th Number.

FLEETWAY THRILLER LIBRARY

by Gordon Hudson

In 1977 IPC Magazines Ltd. produced a new library, the Fleetway Thriller Library. None of the stories was original, all being reprints from hardbacks issued by other publishers principally Robert Hale. With one exception, Gideon's Day by J. J. Marris (John Creasey) they were all run-of-the-mill novels. Four titles were issued each month at 25p. Sixteen titles were issued up to August 1977, and although the September books were announced in the August issues, I do not know whether they actually appeared. Some of those which were issued can now be bought from Woolworth's publishers' remainders. Presumably the Library was not a success as it seems to have been discontinued very quickly in spite of the extremely low price of the books.

The following is a list of the books I have traced up to now. Perhaps some of our fellow hobbyists might be able to complete this.

1-4	Not known	
5	Lakeside Zero by Douglas Enefer	June 1977
6	New Face in Hell by Roger Busby	"
7	Three for a Killing by Douglas Leach	"
8	The Plutonium Heist by William M. Green	"
9	Gideon's Day by J. J. Marris	July 1977
10	The Golden Oyster by Donald Gordon	"
11	Chain of Infamy by George Beare	"
12	Spy Puppets by Geoffrey Davison	"
13	Destruction Man by Charles West	Aug. 1977
14	Flameout by Colin D. Peel	"
15	Special Delivery by James Pattinson	"
16	Shabby Eagles by Bill Gaston	"
17	The Pretty Thing by J. D. Scott	Sept. 1977
18	A Very Big Bang by Philip McCutchan	"
19	The Very Breath of Hell by George Beare	"
20	The Paradise Zone by G. J. Barrett	"