

STORY PAPER

COLLECTORS DIGEST

PRICE
28p

VOL 34.

APRIL 1980

No 400.



OFFERS FOR THE MONTH

Over 4,000 Champions, 1946-52. Trying to reduce these (my selection), good condition, at the amazing price of 100 for £20 + post £2. Worth at least £50! All different. Some early Champions also from Vol. 1, usual prices.

50 asstd. BFL's, mainly good, £40, 2 lots £70 + post. Nugget Library, price and condition as above, my selection.

Magnets - reading copies, mainly Salmons, 100 for £45; 200 for £80.

Gems as above.

Lots of good copies, usual prices. Can offer most papers and comics, fair copies at reduced prices.

"William", a bibliography by Lofts and Adley, ready soon. Orders taken, £3.50 + post.

Rupert Bibliography, reading - available £3.50 + post.

Howard Baker Facsimiles and Book Club specials, sell like mad these days, lists free.

I did think of semi-retiring, some hopes! Busier than ever! Still buying and paying good prices.

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

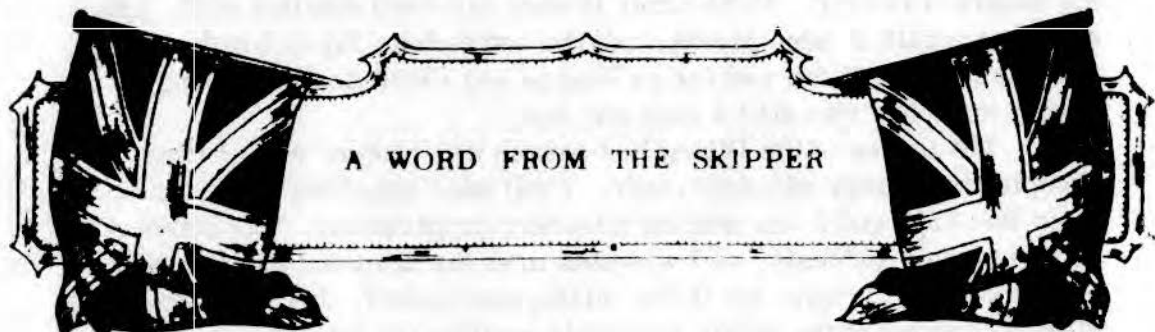
Vol. 34

No. 400

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A WORD FROM THE SKIPPER

WE'RE THERE!

"Somebody's birthday?" enquired our jolly village postman, Bob, this morning, as he handed in another pile of letters.

"Somebody's four-hundredth!" I told him.

"Ah!" said Bob, knowingly. "A wonderful age!"

When you're twenty, it's difficult to look ahead and see yourself at fifty. And when you're thirty, it would be purposeless, discouraging, tempting fate, and pretty awful to imagine what you will be like at sixty. In the same way, when Herbert Leckenby posted off No. 1 of this magazine to subscribers 400 odd months ago, it must have been quite beyond even his optimistic belief that one day the same magazine would

reach the magic figure of 400.

How very different was the Great Britain into which the Digest was born from what it is today. Some things have changed for the better; some things have changed for the sake of change; some things have changed for the worse. But it's all different.

There were still ha'pennies (real ones) and shillings, and half-crowns, and money was still worth something. Families still went to the packed cinemas. The Gaumont British News was still introduced by that snatch from the inspiring "March of the Movies". There was still a Great Western Railway. The trams were still running in London and Leeds, and British public transport was the best in the world. The Lyons Tea Shops were still giving fine service and value for money to the hungry traveller. The Corner Houses provided comfort still, and excellent meals at sane prices, and the bottomless cup of lovely coffee (they kept filling it for you for as long as you liked) cost a shilling. Metric nonsense was still a long way away.

154 issues of the Digest had passed into history when I first occupied the bumpy editorial chair. I had been supposed to take over from No. 157, and I was making leisurely preparations. But Herbert Leckenby died suddenly, so I was shot in at the deep end earlier than I had expected. Forgive me if I'm mixing metaphors. It's the grand and glorious feeling of the magic 400 that's sending me haywire.

I think that I might have quailed, nearly twenty-one years ago had I been able to look into the future, for there have been problems at times. But God has been good to me, and the wonder of C.D. is that it has never missed an issue in the thirty-three years of its existence. That's not a boast. It's just a little prayer of thanks.

Inflation - terrible like a forest fire - has been the big worry of the last dozen years. One glaring example tells it all. When the Digest started, Herbert posted off 240 copies, to be delivered the next day for £1. Today one can post 8 for £1 with the same delivery promise (often pie-crust) with fourpence change. And with that fourpence change you can't even buy a newspaper (full of adverts) or a plain bun.

The passing years have brought but little change to C.D. itself. It has always been devoted mainly to the lore and collection of the old periodicals we loved, though we often place them against a backcloth of

the events of the periods in which they appeared.

The Digest is not a feast of nostalgia, and was never intended to be. In the past few years nostalgia has become an addiction with many people. The Digest does not really cater for them.

Our magazine has been sustained down the years by the simple love and loyalty of its readers all over the world. Though the regular production and dispatch of the magazine has meant a certain amount of self-denial, making my eyes bleary and my scanty locks scantier and my bones creakier and creakier as I rise from the editorial chair, the affection of my readers has carried me along and the years have just swept by.

Plenty of our readers were in at the very beginning, when, to quote the bard, they surely had "shining morning faces". Now, 400 issues further on, still quoting the bard, maybe they are "bearded like the pard and full of strange oaths". (Sounds as though they have been watching too many T.V. plays.)

So much for that. And now back to business. The next time we put the flags out will be next year when, God willing, we shall be celebrating our 35th birthday - our Coral Jubilee. In the meantime, here's to you. And here's to us. In Mrs. Mible's ginger-beer, of course. Those lovely stone bottles.

GOOD-BYE TO ETONS

In the extract from Danny's Diary that we publish this month, we are reminded that it is exactly 50 years since St. Jim's abandoned the familiar Eton suit. It was really unlikely for so momentous a change to occur in mid-term. Greyfriars had made the change at the start of the same term, in January 1930.

The Magnet gained a great deal by the change, for Shields put the boys into school blazers - and Shields's boys in blazers looked fine. The Gem lost by the change, for Macdonald put the boys into sports jackets, and, though he had always been unsurpassed in drawing boys in Etons, his St. Jim's fellows in sports jackets had less appeal.

Though Hamilton himself returned briefly to the Gem to pen the little tale about the change of school attire, he had, down the years, had little to say about the attire of the boys. It was the artists who really led

us in our mind picture of the character. Shields was, undoubtedly, right in putting Greyfriars into blazers. They would certainly have had school uniform blazers, and sports blazers, in addition.

Tweed sports jackets, as depicted by Macdonald, were improbable for the uniform of a school like St. Jim's.

It was Shields who gave Fisher T. Fish his horn-rimmed glasses. It was Chapman, according to the general belief, who gave Bunter his unlikely check trousers. And it was Wakefield who, quite incorrectly, gave Mornington a monocle. On occasion, he did the same thing with Smythe.

Some of the artists were careless at times, but they did a lot for our mental pictures of the characters.

THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S CORNER

"Spring again! And I'm feeling rather bothered. That impudent Mrs. Blackbird had built her nest again in the honeysuckle beside our dining-room window, just out of my reach. Of course, my Mum doesn't let me touch birds. But I can sit in the window of the dining-room and tell Mrs. Blackbird in no uncertain terms what I think of her cheek. I expect, a little later, there will be five little perishers running round the garden, to say nothing of the occupants of two other nests there.

Still, there have been some nice happenings. Mr. and Mrs. Wafer from Australia visited us. That Editor thinks they came to see him, but they were so charming to me, that I knew they really came to see me.

Then a visit from my dear Uncle Les Rowley. He was feeling sad. He had just moved house and left behind 23 lovely feline friends. They all belonged to his neighbours. He couldn't take them with him, of course, so could only say a tearful good-bye. I am sure they all miss him, but I sat on his lap and purred to show my understanding of it all, and I think he cheered up."

TAILPIECE

Snowee gets through a box of Munchies in about three weeks. The new box bears a large announcement: "Discount Price. At least 2p off previous price." The old price 40p. The new price 39½'. Both

boxes from the same supermarket.

Who're the mugs?

THE EDITOR

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DANNY'S DIARY

APRIL 1930

The whole country has gone Mickey Mouse mad since sound came to film cartoons. Mickey seems as popular as Mary Pickford or Al Jolson. There are Mickey Mouse aprons, dusters, shirts, and dolls. Doug even bought a Mickey Mouse dusting doll for his girl friend, Hester Tuffee, to put on the sound arm of her gramophone, so that Mickey is dusting the record as it goes round and round. And when I said "Diddums?" Doug clouted me.

The marvellous Magnet gets mightier and mightier. A lovely month therein, methinks. The first story this month is "Duffer or Hero!" which is a sequel to the last story last month. Coker is sent to Coventry for stopping some 1st Eleven men getting to Rookwood for the football game. But Coker rescues Bunter from the swollen river. Everybody, knowing what an awful swimmer Coker is, thought he must have been drowned. But Coker, when he turns up after drying off in Mr. Joyce's cottage, is amazed at all the fuss. After all, he knows that he is a splendid swimmer. Grand fun.

Next, a glorious school story - "Who Hacked Hacker?" Somebody has hacked Hacker's shin horribly and vanished without a clue. It was in the dark. Fishy says he's not the culprit, and Bunter swears he knows nothing about it. So who did it, then?

Then two lovely stories of the Easter vac, mainly at Wharton Lodge. In "The Mystery of the Silver Box", a man, who says he is Mr. Brown, asks Bunter to look after a silver box, in the woods. Bunter says he will care for the box, and gives his name as Harry Wharton. And Sir Hilton Popper claims that his valet, Sugden, has stolen a valuable moonstone. And Wharton is startled by the attention he suddenly receives from a man called Judson. In the sequel "The

Missing Moonstone", the whole thing is sorted out at last at Wharton Lodge. Magnificently written stories. The Magnet is second to none.

Cambridge won the Boat Race by two lengths, which pleased me, for I am a light blue fanatic. And on the 13th of the month, just in time for Easter Monday, the clocks went on an hour, and Summer Time began.

St. Jim's has finished with Etons. Greyfriars finished with them in the middle of the Courtfield Cracksman series in January. "Eton jackets", said General Skewsome, "are now an anachronism. They survive, I believe, at the school where they originated. Do they survive elsewhere? I say with confidence, sir - no! Only at St. Jim's." The story "Good-bye to Etons" is the first of the month in the Gem, and it is written by the old writer of the St. Jim's tales. His first for ages and ages. Not all that hot a tale, but it seems marvellous after all the tripe the Gem has had, of late.

But it was a flash in the pan.

Next week brought "The Message in Morse" about an Italian boy named Contarini who is kidnapped with his father. I thought Contarini had gone from St. Jim's long ago. Then a farce comedy "Grundy, the Protector", with a lot about the Spalding Hall girls. And finally "The Phantom Motor-Boat" in which the rowers in the school eight are amazed when a ghostly motor-boat dashes up and passes right through them without harm, and then is gone. It's all an invention of Glyn's. The War Office buys Glyn's invention for a large sum of money, so maybe Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister, will now give him a job in the government.

The Cup Final took place at Wembley before the King, and Arsenal beat Huddersfield by 2 - 0.

Princess Elizabeth, the King's granddaughter, celebrated her fourth birthday at Windsor Castle during the month.

In the Nelson Lee Library the long stories about the detective and his assistants have been "The Night Raiders", "Without Trace", "The King of Kidnappers", and "The Riddle of the Mine". There is good news at the end of the month. The St. Frank's stories are coming back, with all the old characters. It seems that St. Frank's has been rebuilt. It has gone up quicker than a council house.

On the 26th of the month the airship, Graf Zeppelin, cruised over London, and then went to Cardington.

At the pictures this month we have seen Barbara Stanwyck in a thriller "The Locked Door"; Betty Compson, Arthur Lake, Joe E. Brown, and Louise Fazenda in a nice musical "On With the Show". The latter has some lovely tunes, including "Am I Blue?" Ken Maynard in "Senor Americana"; Norma Shearer and Basil Rathbone in "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney" (Mrs. Cheyney is a society thief); and Ruth Chatterton and Lewis Stone in "Madame X". All of these are talkies, though there are silent versions of all except the musical film.

The Popular is still slipping, I am sad to say. With the latest series of Rio Kid stories, the Kid has left the paper. It is a lovely series, in which a gunman named Slick Slinger gets the Kid to aid him in getting a missing heir away from the Navajo Indians, where the heir has lived since he was taken to the Indians as a baby. Slinger secretly intends to murder the heir - but he has a change of heart at the end. The stories are "The Peril Trail"; "The Prisoner of the Lost Valley"; "A Life for a Life"; and "The Rio Kid's Quest". So good - which makes it all the sadder that the Kid has now gone. The Rookwood stories (with a new artist) are alternating every other week with a farcical story of Calcroft School by Sidney Drew - and I hate Sidney Drew's stories. The long Ferrers Locke tales continue, and I'm tired of them. There is a Chin-wag page by the editor and a page by Willie Wangle, the boy wizard. For Greyfriars the series is running about Loder becoming captain in place of Wingate.

Another change is that the chapters of all the tales are no longer numbered. They are just given titles. It's a change for no reason at all. Just irritating. I wonder what's going to become of the Popular.

Two lovely tales in the Schoolboys' Own Library. "The Greyfriars Hypnotist" (he is Vernon-Smith), and "St. Jim's at Sea" about some of the St. Jim's forms going to sea aboard the S.S. Condor, with Mr. Ratcliff in charge. The best St. Jim's tale I have read for years.

At the end of the month the Australian cricketers, who are to play in the Tests this summer, arrived. The main players are Woodfull, the captain, plus Don Bradman, Grimmett, Oldfield, Ponsford, and McCabe. I hope it's a sunny summer for them.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: S. O. L. No. 121, "The Greyfriars Hypnotist" comprised a Red

Magnet of the same title from early in 1911, plus a number of chapters from "Bravo, the Bounder", a Red Magnet of late 1913. Actually the two tales do not weld together all that well, owing to the best part of two years which originally separated them, a period in which the character of the Bounder had undergone some change. S.O.L. No. 122, "St. Jim's at Sea" comprised two quite delightful blue Gems from mid-1908, entitled "St. Jim's at Sea" and "The School on the Steamer". It was part of the Gem's very first long series. It shows how haphazard was the editing of the S.O.L., for the entire series comprised six blue Gems, and the others could - and should - have been published in the S.O.L., where it would have made three separate issues of the monthly book. As it was, there was a waste of excellent material.)

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BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

I am happy to say that the Union Jack Mystery by Gordon Hudson has been cleared up. The back page of the copy of Union Jack No. 882 is the wrong one. I checked it with my own copy which I have in a bound volume and discovered the whole of page 19 contained the rest of the Fighting Scot instalment. One of our kind readers has offered to do a photo-copy from his own issue and will let me have it to replace the wrong page. I will then let Gordon have it to read. The serial continues quite correctly in U.J. No. 883.

Princess Snowee's Corner is as interesting as usual. All our cats have their own little fancies. My Bebe likes to sit as near to my typewriter as possible without actually stopping me from working, just to make a few errors.

THE NAME'S THE SAME or the Name Game by John Bridgwater

Travelling about one sometimes comes across an unfamiliar name which arouses sufficient interest to prompt a visit to the local reference library. But to really stimulate the imagination one has to find a very familiar name related to something quite different to that which it is normally associated in one's mind.

The Blake Saga contains a wealth of names, some of which the reader never expects to find in real life. However, some of the unlikely ones do exist and in circumstances which arouse quite intriguing speculations. Following the advice of the TV advertisement the other day I took a "finger stroll" through the Yellow Pages and what did I find?

Why, Captain Dack has retired from the sea and taken up farming, a certain Miss Hardield does interior decorating design now and a gentleman named Kestrel hires out transport. Here is food for the imagination. Other namesakes of Blake's adversaries I have noticed are:- A Mr. Reece in the insurance broking business rubbing shoulders with a Mr. Smith running a delivery service and another doing excavations (or are they one and the same). A really unexpected one is Waldo putting on magic shows and cabaret turns, also hiring out fancy dress in between shows. More familiar ones can be equally thought provoking. How about doing your shopping in a store run by G. M. Plummer? I wonder what sort of cakes Gilbert and Eileen Hale would turn out. I would certainly love to be sold a camera by Dirk Dolland. I found the real gem of my little collection of names in Malta. The name was displayed with characteristic boldness above a tightly shuttered little shop in a narrow side street in Valetta. There was not the slightest clue as to what sort of business was carried on there, I still speculate about it whenever its picture appears on the screen during a family holiday slide show. What is the name? Sorry I almost forgot to tell you. The name over the shop was ZENITH.

CONSULTING ROOM CHAT (2)

by Derek Ford

Ballistics. Long-serving readers of Blakiana will no doubt recall Sexton Blake's monograph "Speculations on Ballistic Stigmata in Firearms". Linking the murder weapon with the murder is important in every case. But now Blake will find himself back in his laboratory, for a new bullet developed by Remington is encased in nylon which is discarded as the bullet leaves the barrel, and there is no rifling on the bullet to show which weapon fired it.

Orchids. In Anthony Parsons' case-book "The Mystery of the Bankrupt Estate" (132/3) the Assistant Commissioner, Sir Edward Granfield, after wining and dining Blake and Tinker, persuades them to take up the position of "gardeners" at Barrington Manor in order to keep watch on Clay Crehan who he believes to be the missing swindler Charles Crispin. Says the A.C. "No - but his girl's father is advertising for a gardener, Blake. And, more amazing still, for a man who is an expert on orchid cultivation. I don't mind admitting that we haven't such a man at the

Yard. I don't in the least mind admitting that for days past I've been racking my brains to think of someone who could combine orchidology with watching Clay Crehan. And now, by the oddest chance, I ask a man to dine with me whom all the world knows does combine these two essentials in his own person." All the world may know of Sexton Blake as an expert on orchid cultivation, but I am sure it will come as a surprise to readers of "Blakiana" this very novel introduction to a case. But perhaps some reader has come across a case where Blake's expertise with orchids has been an important ingredient. I would certainly like to know about it.

Walter Tyrer's companion case-book contains a neat little cameo of a public library including "To the right was the general reading room. Here the day's newspapers were securely clamped to stands, and whiskered and shabby old gentlemen, in search of jobs they would never come within a million miles of obtaining, peered at them either with short-sighted eyes or through magnifying glasses; in one case, at least, through the broken bottom of a bottle."

* * * * *

THEIR FOUR-HUNDREDTH!

THE MAGNET

No. 400 appeared in the Autumn of 1915, not a good period in either the Magnet or the Gem. Just a month had passed since the disappearance of the familiar and famous Red Cover.

The story in the issue was "The Sunday Crusaders", written by a young and inexperienced substitute writer. For all except those who enjoy a melodramatic and over-sentimental wallow, it was pretty awful. And it was certainly remarkable. A religious story - at least, a story which had religion poured over it like syrup. It was a failure because of the way it was over-written, for plenty of tales with a religious motif, like those of Reed, are dearly-loved by millions.

Skinner goes to the pictures to see Charlie Chaplin on a Sunday, to show his contempt for religion. And, toward the end of the tale, he and Bolsover set out to replace the church bell with a tin containing stones. Up in the belfry, something gives way, and they fall. Bolsover manages to catch hold of a beam; Skinner manages to catch hold of

Bolsover. To save Bolsover being dragged down, Skinner lets go, and plunges into the church far below.

In an astonishing finale, Skinner is dying in the night, in the school sanitorium, from multiple injuries, and the Head cannot decide whether to send for the boy's parents. This tale was covered in a Let's Be Controversial article, some time ago.

THE GEM

Once again, of course, the date was the Autumn of 1915. The blue cover was still with the Gem, and would be for some time yet. The blue dye was easier to obtain in wartime than the red one.

The story is "When Duty Calls". This was by the genuine Martin Clifford, but it is heavily dated with a wartime atmosphere. The boys are planning to perform "The Huns' Invasion", and have a number of German uniforms, complete with spiked helmets. Blake's older cousin, Gilbert Blake, visits St. Jim's. They call him "Gilbert the Filbert", for he is a k-nut. Tricks are played on him by Figgins and Co. and other groups, and he finds himself surrounded by "German" soldiers. At the finish, he joins the army as a private, and finds happiness and loses his pasty complexion. A light affair, with too many slapstick touches. Neither "The Greyfriars Crusaders" nor "When Duty Calls" was ever republished.

SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY

No. 400 appeared fairly early in the Second World War. The price had just risen by a halfpenny to 4½d, and the S.O.L. was only a month or two from its finish. The story was the middle section of the Jim Valentine series from the Magnet of early 1933.

MODERN BOY

The 400th issue of this paper appeared in October 1935. It still had the familiar orange and blue cover, reminiscent of the Magnet. Charles Hamilton was absent at this time, but W. E. Johns's "Biggles" was going strong.

SEXTON BLAKE by Josie Packman

We have now reached the 400th issue of our Collectors' Digest

and by way of marking the event I should like to write a few words about the two most famous papers which recorded the adventures of Sexton Blake.

The first series of the Sexton Blake Library did not reach number 400 so the actual 400th issue of the Library was No. 18 of the 2nd series. The story is by one of our Editor's favourite authors, Pierre Quiroule, the title being "The Adventure of the Albanian Avenger".

The 400th issue of the Union Jack was written by William Murray Graydon, one of the most prolific writers of Sexton Blake tales. The tale itself must have been rather a sad one as the title is "The Child Beater" but I have no doubt that Sexton Blake put everything to rights and the child beater of 1911 got his just deserts, which goes to show that Sexton Blake has always been modern.

NELSON LEE LIBRARY by Bob Blythe

The date is 3rd February, the year 1923, and another famous paper is issuing its 400th number. It is not exactly celebrating, because the editor of the Nelson Lee Library was taking it in his stride, and probably considered it all part of his day's work. Celebrations for him, were being reserved for the 500th number. Nevertheless, we can look back at it, in parenthesis, as it were, while we enjoy the C.D.'s own anniversary.

"Petticoat Rule" was the title of the third story in the series of the same name. This yarn does not get many mentions in the literature of the St. Frank's saga, but it does mark, in my opinion, the beginning of Brooks best period, i. e. 1923-1928.

The story itself, for those unfamiliar with this period of the 'Lee', concerned itself with the attempts of a group of women teachers, with the formidable Miss Trumble as Head Mistress, to impose their own teaching methods on the whole school. This comes about because Miss Trumble as a school Governor, forbids Dr. Stafford to carry out a richly deserved flogging. As a result he resigns, to be followed shortly after by the whole teaching staff. Miss Trumble thereupon installs women teachers, with herself as Head.

Unfortunately, their methods are more suited to the kindergarten, and Seniors and Juniors alike, at first see the humorous side, and play

up accordingly. However, as their privileges are taken away one by one - for example, football is forbidden as being too rough, a rebellion led by Nipper is soon in full swing. Only after many bitter battles with the opposition in the form of gypsies and the rougher elements of the locality, is Miss Trumble finally routed and the masters return.

A thoroughly interesting and unusual yarn, and one that deserves more of the limelight than it usually achieves.

... AND OURS!

LES ROWLEY writes: The pages of the "Collectors' Digest" have mirrored so many of those reflections of youth dear to my heart that I cannot simply let the occasion of the four-hundredth issue pass without a word of appreciation.

Memories of favourite authors, and their beloved characters, are recalled in happy and seemingly endless profusion. The appetite is just as keen after each issue has been read, and the long month begins before another copy is due.

Thank you for your share in bringing so much happiness into my life and for carrying on the good work so earnestly begun those many years ago by Herbert Leckenby.

Time was when cricket balls were red, pads were white, and the mere idea of aluminium bats would have been treated with scorn. Time was when the only pain one would suffer from a soccer match would be a throat hoarse from cheering on one's side. Time was ... but then, one could go on for ever. Those days of youth have a value, a kindness, almost a gentility, compared to the harsher - more aggressive present. Thank you, and the contributors, for recalling them.

I. HEWSON writes: The Digest remains as fresh and critically energetic as ever. I have been reading it for about ten years now, and have yet to come across a copy which fails to raise interest and pleasure. It seems to strike just the right balance between studious comment and relaxed observation.

I remain, as always, in enormous debt to the efforts of both yourself and the numerous contributors.

R. H. CUSHING writes: Permit me to be among the first to

congratulate you for a remarkable achievement. To hold the attention and interest of 'old boys' like myself for a period of almost thirty-four years is surely an accomplishment without parallel in this day and age. My one regret is that I have been denied the pleasure of reading C.D. until comparatively recent years when sheer chance brought it to my attention.

A kindly fate indeed - I became a devotee overnight.

I have a strong conviction that the 400th issue will be but one of many historic mile-stones yet to be recorded.

Floreat C.D'.

LEN WORMULL writes: 'With your permission and co-operation, I intend to do my best to carry on. I promise you that I shall do my utmost to maintain the high level, both intellectually and morally, that Herbert always attained with the journal, one of the great loves of his life.'

With these words, just over twenty years ago, Eric Fayne took over the reins of C.D. from dear Herbert Leckenby, its founder. The 400th edition of C.D. bears testimony to this promise being well and truly fulfilled. How proud our editor must feel. In celebrating this magical and joyous occasion, let us not forget the personal sacrifices and hardships that must have been his lot in making it all possible. My heartfelt thanks and congratulations for a most wonderful job.

JIM COOK writes: This morning I kept an appointment with the Mayor of Auckland City to talk about the 400th issue of the C.D. At 79 he works 18 hours a day and was delighted when I showed him reprints of our favourite books. As I had a duplicate Howard Baker MAGNET reprint, The Rebellion of Harry Wharton, I gave this to him plus a 1930 Union Jack. He glanced through a GEM reprint and a Nelson Lee Library reprint. His eyes lit up as he glanced through "these lovely books".

He asked me if I would write a few words of appreciation for the 400th edition of the C.D. and this letter I write for that purpose.

"Robbie", as Sir Dove-Myer Robinson is affectionately known, spent a few minutes of nostalgic charm looking through the Magnet and Union Jack. He will snatch moments of his very busy job going through

the Magnet and Union Jack I gave him and my journey down to the Mayor's Office in the city here was well worth the trip for the great welcome he gave seeing our hobby books for the first time after many decades.

"Robbie" asked if the Auckland press had at any time looked into the hobby but I told him it hadn't. Down south, Dunedin and Christchurch, had published details about our hobby, but not up here in the North Island. So I won't be surprised if a journalist contacts me some time wanting to know about the hobby.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Very grateful thanks to the writers of scores of letters, received at the editorial office, with congratulations on this milestone of C.D. The letters are deeply appreciated, and will all be retained in a treasure chest. We hope to print a few more of them next month.)

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DEATH OF MRS. RHODA STORY

We very deeply regret to learn of the death of Mrs. Rhoda Story of Bramalea, Ontario. Mrs. Story and her husband, Bill, have been loyal and valued supporters of Collectors' Digest for a great many years, and visited Excelsior House when they have been on holiday in England from time to time. Mrs. Story had a very sweet personality, and we can never forget her warm friendliness.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Bill and the family in their tragic loss.

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NELSON LEE COLUMN

THE FAKE

by William Lister

Sooner or later, in the course of your life, you will come across a fake; be it a picture, a coin, or one of the human kind. In whatever realm you have suffered from the effects of contact with a fake the result is the same - disappointment. Fortunately, even in the course of sixty-eight years I have come across very few. One of my first occurred when I was very young and nearly shattered my faith in human nature.

It was way back in 1920. At our nearest sub-Post Office and newsagents I had noticed, nailed to the counter, several silver coins of the two-shilling and half-a-crown variety. I never asked why; youngsters

usually got a clip over the ear for asking questions; but I found out the hard way.

One day, very elated, and clutching a new half crown, coupled with thoughts of being able to purchase copies of the "Nelson Lee", "Magnet" or "Gem" and maybe a "Union Jack" and a stamp to write to Edwy Searles Brooks as we were invited to do so in his column in the "Nelson Lee". After all it was very rare for me to see such a coin, let alone own one.

Now comes the crunch! Choosing my papers and asking for my 1½d. stamp I passed my silver coin over eagerly looking for my change. The postmaster took my coin with a smile (he was as eager to receive my coin as I was to part with it) he bounced my valuable coin on the counter and his smile turned to a puzzled frown. From under the counter he produced a hammer and a nail, and finally picking a space among his nailed coins he hammered mine among them, explaining to me it was a fake, he took my purchases back - hence my first experience of a fake.

In a moment, dear reader, you will understand why I have gone to some lengths to describe the above incident. Other fakes have had the same effect on me - disappointment!

It seems generally agreed by readers of the "Nelson Lee" that among the many series written by Edwy Searles Brooks one of the finest was the Ezra Quirke series, and one of the most disappointing was "The Return of Ezra Quirke". There can be many reasons for this, some have already been mentioned by various writers in "C.D.". So far as my opinion is worth, here it is.

Ezra Quirke came into my life at just the right season of the year to make him most acceptable - winter. One of the best of British winters, and you can't beat a good British winter, ask Charles Dickens, who happens to mention it several times in 'A Christmas Carol'.

"It was cold, bleak, biting weather; foggy with all. Scrooge could hear the people outside wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was dark already - it had not been light all day - the fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, the houses opposite were mere phantoms."

So it came about that in the year of our Lord 1925 and in the month of October, as a young lad I pressed my way home through wind and sleet and a rapidly darkening evening from school, calling to purchase my "Nelson Lee" meanwhile.

Blackpool is known for its winds and if you happened to live in a caravan you got the full force of it. That night, bitterly cold and dark, with flurries of sleet I settled in a chair under the paraffin oil lamp. Its dim yellow light revealing the opening paragraph of a never-to-be forgotten tale, "The Schoolboy Magician". On such a night then with our caravan lurching in the gale I read these words "The wind howled and moaned round St. Frank's with a steadily increasing force, now and again it rose to a mighty shriek and the solid old piles fairly shook under the force of the elements. It was a wild October night."

Our little gypsy-type caravan lurched again, the oil lamp flickered down on the pages of my "Nelson Lee" and a few moments later Ezra Quirke walked into my life. The fact that I recall this nearly 55 years later shows the impression it made on me. You don't forget things like this.

Through that October - November of 1925 the amazing story of Ezra Quirke unfolded. Gripped as we St. Frank's fans were, the fact that Quirke was revealed as a fake in the end, didn't affect us much, we had had our thrills, our never-to-be-forgotten saga thanks to Edwy Searles Brooks.

"The Return of Ezra Quirke" failed to get off the ground. He was a fake. This time we knew it before we started to read. He was no longer able to grip us. Not even Edwy Searles Brooks could rescue Ezra Quirke from the fact that here was an impostor, he had lost his grip on us, we were disappointed in him.

Imagine (if you can) Sexton Blake, Doctor Fu Manchu, Tarzan or Sherlock Holmes written off as a fake at the end of their first appearance. No pen on earth could have staged a successful comeback for them.

Dear old Ezra Quirke, how we love him, but let's forget about "The Return of Ezra Quirke".

TWO DIFFERENT AND YET THE SAME

by J. R. Murtagh
New Zealand

When I have an hour to two to spare there's nothing I enjoy more than browsing through my Magnets and looking at the covers and inside illustrations.

Some collectors will only have genuine Frank Richards stories and I feel they are missing a lot by ignoring the stories by substitute authors. They seem to forget that the illustrations are not substitute and are all part and parcel of the Magnet saga. What would the Magnet be like with no cover or inside illustrations?

Recently I was looking through the covers of my Magnets (I'm only ten issues short of the 1683 that were published). Suddenly I came to a full stop at issue 859 thinking I had seen the same cover before. I checked back and found the one I thought was the same on No. 751. It depicted the same incident that we all know happened almost daily to Bunter, but was an entirely different drawing. I am sure they were both by Chapman, which goes to show what

FREE-BICYCLES FOR READERS!

(See Your Editor's Latest Offer-Inside.)



A HURRIED EXIT FOR WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER!

Illustration by Chapman from the story 'A Hurried Exit for William George Bunter'.

Eric Fayne ~ A TRIBUTE

We are proud to remember that the Collectors' Digest was born in the North. We are not too proud to acknowledge that it was nurtured in other pastures. It was the dying wish of Herbert Leckenby, that good and humane man, that the magazine he had created should survive him. Herbert's last act was to ensure that it should be so: he chose his own successor. And he chose not with any regional prejudice, but with a visionary's certainty and insight. He turned to Eric Fayne - and Northern hobbyists over twenty years couldn't have been happier with his choice.

Eric has now been Editor of the Collectors' Digest for almost two-thirds of its publishing history. Under his inspired guidance the fullness of time has brought it to many notable landmarks - its coming-of-age, its Silver Jubilee, and now to its four-hundredth issue. 400 issues! It is a staggering achievement; and it would have been quite impossible without a man of extraordinary ability, dedication, sound judgment and boundless goodwill at the helm.

Probably no-one outside the four walls of Excelsior House can begin to conceive of the work, and the personal sacrifice, that has gone to the making of this wonderful record. Dear Eric, how can we adequately confess our debt? Your thanks must be the knowledge of the joy which month by month has been your gift to an unseen host the world over. The multitude whose lives you have made a little richer will join me today in paying heartfelt tribute, and wishing you a long and happy continuation of your reign.

GEOFFREY WILDE

(Chairman, Northern OBBC)

* * *

Those readers of the C.D. who expect it to land on their doormats regularly on the first day of each month, and who begin to get fretful if it is a day or two late, can have little conception of the troubles of producing a regular monthly magazine with several hundred subscribers.

First of all, there are the routine difficulties, such as trying to buy quantities of envelopes of the right size, when these days they go out of production for several months at a time. When they are purchased, they all have to be addressed. Subscriptions, varying from a single copy to a year's supply, all have to be recorded and reminders sent when appropriate. The vagaries of the so-called Express Post from York to Aldershot constitute a perennial headache. A commercial publication would employ clerical staff to attend to all this, but the C.D. is run by Eric alone.

But it is the contents of the C.D. that are so noteworthy. It is a little short of astonishing that four hundred issues, most of them produced by Eric, have all contained

original items, reminiscent, critical, poetic, factual, or containing background information, all new, ever-interesting, amusing, thought-provoking, or just nostalgic. Let there be no mistake: only an editor with Eric's devotion, energy, talents, and resourcefulness could have kept an amateur magazine running so long. The London O. B. B. C. is more than happy to pay him a well-deserved tribute.

ROGER JENKINS

* * *

Congratulations to our worthy Editor on this auspicious occasion, not forgetting the late Herbert Leckenby, who by laying such strong foundations, enabled Eric to build the C. D. into the welcome addition to our lives that it is today.

The Nelson Lee column has appeared every month since No. 13, in January 1948, which makes it almost as old as the C. D. itself. It is very pleasing therefore, to feel that the N. L. section has more than played its part in the great achievement of the C. D. reaching its 400th issue.

That St. Frank's is still appreciated today even more than in the past is due, not only to a relatively small band of enthusiasts, but also to editorial policy.

The work involved in producing the C. D. and the Annual is enormous and time-consuming, and by keeping the C. D. alive, our editor is helping to keep the memory of E. S. B. and St. Frank's alive. For that, and for his devotion to the task of satisfying all tastes, we can only say - 'Thank you, Eric'.

BOB BLYTHE

* * *

400 ISSUES - WHAT A SCORE!
AND GOOD THAT THERE WILL BE STILL MORE!

Congratulations to Eric Fayne, our dear friend and editor, on the 400th edition of Collectors' Digest, a magazine which surely has a place in our affections equal with our favourite Old Boys' (or Girls') papers. For me it is the successor of The School Friend, The Schoolgirl and The Schoolgirls' Own; I'm very happy that Barbara Redfern, Clara Trevlyn, Marjorie Hazeldene and Bessie Bunter from Cliff House, as well as Betty Barton & Co. from Morcove, still pop up in it from time to time and rub shoulders with their boy chums. An unbroken run of 400 issues is something to be proud of, and this is a moment to express our deep gratitude to the editor for his unremitting energy and dedication in producing the C. D. so regularly every month. Lots of love to Eric, to Madam and the Princess Snowee. Like

the Collectors' Digest, LONG MAY THEY CONTINUE TO FLOURISH!

MARY CADOGAN

* * *

That the Collectors' Digest has reached the 400th issue is a remarkable achievement, and we have to thank Eric for all his work and the pleasure he has given us for many years. Even in great adversity last year he carried on with the good work, and I am sure that Eric must have sat up late many nights so that each issue should appear in time at the beginning of the month. Not a single issue has been missed, something which cannot be said for many a professional publication.

As conductor of the Blakiana section I must say how much I appreciate the way the articles have been presented, especially when Eric has been able to use cover pictures from the Union Jack. Not an easy task to sort out the most interesting ones to use.

My special thanks go to Eric for his delightful "Princess Snowee's Corner", one which all cat-lovers must appreciate - and it is surprising how many of our members are owned by cats. Another favourite feature is Eric's reports on the films shown in the Small Cinema. They bring back memories of films which I enjoyed many years ago, and some of which we have been lucky enough to see on TV. Many thanks, Eric, for all your hard work, and may you continue as our Editor for a long time yet. We may even see the 500th issue with you at the helm!

JOSIE PACKMAN

* * *

Four hundred issues of the dear C.D!
What splendid visions that thought calls to mind;
Four hundred months of purest ecstasy;
Four hundred magic spells our hearts to bind.
With eager fingers we the pages turn
As month by month again we're held in thrall;
The image of our childhood we discern,
The pleasures of our youth again recall.
The world created by the Nelson Lee,
The Union Jack, the Magnet, and the Gem,

cont'd ...

We live in still; how easy now to see
The values in our lives we owe to them.

Between our band of devotees this link -
The C.D. - made of paper marked with ink!

Paper and ink! - Whence is their power to life
Our spirits thus, our reason to constrain?
From one man's skill, his dedicated gift,
Our Editor and dear friend, Eric Fayne.
His is the genius that casts the spell;
Within his kindly grasp these treasures lie.
How can we give him thanks enough? how tell
Him all we feel? With gratitude we'll try.
We'll give a sweeter scent to violets dim,
And polish ice till it's more slipp'ry far,
With tintured brush the rainbow we'll re-limn,
And with a taper seek to light a star.

When we succeed these simple tasks to do,
Then, Eric, we may pen a tribute fit for you.

JACK ALLISON

* * *

FREE TO READERS! TWO REAL PHOTOS OF FAMOUS FOOTBALLERS
PRESENTED WITH THIS ISSUE!



BILLY BUNTER IS NOT WANTED!

(A Funnishous incident from the long complete tale inside)

a great artist he was. Study the pictures of the Magnets reproduced here and I'm sure you will agree with me.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Readers of C.D. Annual will recall that, some years ago, we published two covers of Magnets - one the work of Arthur Clarke, and one, of many years later, obviously copied from it, by Leonard Shields.)

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

NELSON LEE COLUMN continued

THE NEW ST. FRANK'S

by R. J. Godsave

A mighty explosion which had occurred a few months earlier in the disused quarry workings near St. Frank's, and had destroyed the Modern House and had caused some damage to the Ancient House was the prelude to the re-building and enlargement of St. Frank's by the addition of two new boarding Houses and a School House.

The two new Houses were the East and West Houses with the Ancient and Modern retaining their names. These two new Houses would contain the studies, dormitories and dining-rooms, etc., with the School House containing the class-rooms, laboratories, workshops, etc. Behind the School House was the Head's private residence built like the rest of St. Frank's in true Gothic style.

No. 537 "The New Houses at St. Frank's", o.s., was the first Nelson Lee of the series after the return of the St. Frank's boys from the summer holidays. This issue of the Lee dealt with the Houses and a map of the new St. Frank's was on the inside page of the cover. The whole series was dominated by the reformation of Ralph Leslie Fullwood and his uphill fight. It is rather difficult to think of Fullwood other than the cad of the Remove after very many years. He was captain of the Ancient House Remove in the first St. Frank's Nelson Lee when Nipper arrived as a new boy under the name of Bennett.

Whether E. S. Brooks was to gain from this enlargement of St. Frank's is open to question. He certainly wrote a fine Scouting series just prior to the break-up for the summer holidays, the junior section under canvas with the senior section housed in the Ancient House. It would now be necessary to distribute the boys among the four Houses. This would mean an influx of new boys and masters to bring the Houses up to strength.

I feel that the old cosiness of the old St. Frank's was lost and not regained. It is possible that Brooks did have more scope for his writings, but certainly at a cost.

* * * * *

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

MARRIOTT, 27 GREENVIEW DRIVE, NORTHAMPTON, Tel. 711874.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 161 - Gem No. 484 - "Looking for Trouble"

It is a vital reflection on the St. Jim's scene in 1917 that most of the interesting characters should belong to the Fourth Form and that the ostensible heroes - Tom Merry & Co. - should have merely walking-on parts in this story. The opening chapter was a French lesson with Monsieur Morny, in which Cardew began ragging in a spirit of idle mischief. The French master was in an unusually bad temper and, when he caned Cardew, Cardew developed the ragging in a more malicious way.

Cardew was a character who featured for about ten years in the Gem with some considerable success, but afterwards Charles Hamilton was never able to recapture that inimitable mocking style with overtones of whimsicality. I recall discussing Cardew with Charles Hamilton and he admitted that in the post-war books Cardew's character had deteriorated into something of a rogue with the attractive qualities lost. Certainly when he was "Looking for Trouble" he also reminded the reader more of Ponsonby than of de Courcy.

Monsieur Gustav Morny was, like most French masters, short of money. His relatives had fled from the advancing German armies and he was sending all his spare cash to help them. When Gussy lost a five pound note in the French master's study and Monsieur Morny was later seen enclosing a five pound note in a registered envelope, only Gussy was certain that the French master was not a thief. Needless to say, it was Cardew who brought matters to a head by making what was more or less a public accusation of theft.

War-time references have a habit of dating a story more than anything else. Trimble complained that the school tuckshop rationed them to one slice of cake each, and he was quite keen to fag for Knox as the prefect did not observe the food regulations. When Gussy proposed giving a feast, the guests had to bring their own bread and sugar. Some reference to the free availability of beer, whisky and champagne suggested that not all items were hard to come by, but it was never explained what Gussy was able to purchase for his guests as a basis of the feast that did not amount to food hogging.

The St. Jim's story ran to only thirteen chapters in a twenty page issue of the Gem, and the five pages of extracts from Tom Merry's weekly and the Greyfriars Herald could perhaps have been dispensed with. But there were some compensations, particularly in Warwick Reynolds' drawings with their attractive firm lines and more individual features and, if Cardew did not appear at his best, Gussy remained a joy throughout. In view of the fact that the war had then reached a critical stage, it is surprising how much fun this serious story nevertheless possesses.

* * * * *

REVIEW

"THE GREYFRIARS PLOTTERS"

Frank Richards
(Howard Baker: £12)

"The Greyfriars Plotters" is a rather trite and vague title, not really worthy of this superb Howard Baker "special". However, what's in a name? It's the contents which matter, and they just cannot be faulted.

Here we have eight consecutive Red Magnets from the start of 1910. We find ourselves, in fact, at the tail end of the halfpenny series. When the Gem re-started as a penny paper, the Magnet came into the shops at a halfpenny, and, at the start of 1910, it had been in existence for nearly two years, appearing every Tuesday without fail. The first story in the book "Nugent Minor" is actually double normal length in a Double Number at a penny, to give readers a taste of what is in store in the near future.

"Nugent Minor" relates the arrival of Frank Nugent's younger brother, and how, for a time, Greyfriars didn't suit him - and he didn't suit Greyfriars. Dicky Nugent's career almost comes to an untimely end when he stuns Wingate with a stone he flung at the Greyfriars captain. Though, as years went by, Frank Richards tended to dwell too much on the theme of the wayward younger brother of some prominent character, it is treated with happy restraint here, and its freshness makes it one of the best of the early Red Magnets.

The next issue "The Dandies of the Remove" is a halfpenny one, with Miss Primrose (and her second-in-command, Miss Locke, who was to disappear from Cliff House long before the School Friend made its bow) throws a party for her girls to which Greyfriars boys are invited. So the early Miss Prim was nothing like so frumpish in early days as she is sometimes depicted. Harry Wharton is accused of stealing a valuable tie-pin from Ionides of the Sixth, but the culprit was Bunter who was "borrowing" items right and left without permission so that he could shine at the party.

Ionides was an excellent character study, and just why he was faded out of the stories is one of the mysteries of those early days.

Then another halfpenny one - "The Disappearance of Wun Lung" - and a very famous

one in those far-off days. It was reprinted several times. Wun Lung goes through the ice as a result of the bullying of Bulstrode - and does not come up. And Bulstrode spends many harassed hours until the wily Chink chooses to come on the scene again. Bulstrode is another good character study whom Richards dropped in later years.

Next week in "The Greyfriars Athletes", Bulstrode is imprisoned in the crypt by Wun Lung, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, on a very early visit to Greyfriars, acts as a detective to trace the missing schoolboy. There are some pleasant period touches, such as one often comes across in these early tales; the telegram at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a word; the letter posted and delivered within a few hours; and "Rosey Posey" cigarettes at 20 for three-halfpence. "They are too cheap to taste vewy nice, I am sure," comments D'Arcy, with no experience of the matter.

Then another penny Double Number "The Greyfriars Fifteen", and rather an odd tale in a way. Harry Wharton's eleven sets off for a football match against Bolsover College. Quite a journey, for in another delicious period sequence, we find that the team has a brake to the local station, and then quite a journey by train, for the rail fare is 1s. 9d. return. And when they arrive they find that Bolsover plays rugger, which doesn't say much for the way the sports masters arrange the fixtures. On that occasion Bolsover wins, but in a return game, the Greyfriars juniors win - and, for effect, the author describes the thrilling match in the present tense. Truly an odd little yarn.

Then the last ever halfpenny issues of the Magnet, "The Greyfriars Treasure", a light but lively romp of which the title tells most of it. Then the first of the permanent penny issues "The Greyfriars Plot" in which Ionides features once again. And the theme of amateur theatricals which the author always seemed to enjoy. And, because the juniors decide that Marjorie Hazeldene can't act, she turns up as Frank Nugent's Aunt Matilda", which seems rather an unlikely caper for the Cliff House damsel.

The final story in this magnificent volume is "The Cad of the Sixth". The cad of the title is Carberry, who had the Loder part in early Magnet days. This story is his final appearance, for he is expelled at the close of the tale. And with the passing of Carberry, Loder came into his own, after being a shadowy figure for so long.

The expulsion of a leading character, who never turned up again, is a most unusual thing in the Hamilton history. In fact, I fancy this instance may be unique.

A splendid volume, with all the charm of the very early days and all the luxury of these "specials" for the connoisseur. In closing this review, one cannot miss remarking on the excellence of the artists, Arthur Clarke's work, in all the illustrations. As we have commented before, even in 1910 Clarke's work was just slightly old-fashioned with a whiff of old lavender. But the action and the character in his pictures is noteworthy and remarkable. (You can often find his initials AC in a corner of one of his drawings, and he was prolific in many papers early in the century.) When Clarke died, far too young, the Magnet lost something.

A splendid book to give distinction and period charm to your well-polished bookcase.

 BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

 No. 73. THE TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE

Our opening big film came from Warner Bros., and was Doris Day, Kirk Douglas, and Lauren Bacall in "Young Man of Music". I recall this as an excellent biographical drama, telling the life-story of a famous American trumpet-player, though I forget his name. Tom & Jerry were back in the same bill in glowing Technicolor in "Tom & Jerry in the Hollywood Bowl". Another item which seems interesting was a colour film "Charlie McCarthy in Sweden". I forget who Charlie McCarthy was.

The following week brought another musical - also from Warner's. This was James Cagney, with a big cast which included Doris Day and Virginia Mayo in "Fine and Dandy". This was Cagney's first musical since "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and not a patch on it. No film with the versatile and energetic Cagney could ever be a failure, but one thought sadly of the Yankee Doodle film which we had played years before, with its wonderful songs, and such glorious Cagney musicals as "Footlight Parade", packed with lovely tunes, which we had played long before the war. In the same bill with "Fine and Dandy" was a colour Barney Bear cartoon "The Bee-Devilled Bruin".

And now, after a fair musical, came a very good one from M.G.M. Judy Garland and Van Johnson in "In the Good Old Summertime". I have always loved this one, set at the turn of the century, with plenty of delightful old tunes of the period, and with some

sparkling skating scenes. Buster Keaton gave sterling fun support in this one. It was his last for M.G.M., and, possibly, one of his last of all time.

A coloured cartoon in the same bill was "The Boy and the Wolf". There was also a second colour cartoon "Porky Chops", and several other colour items. A fine all-colour show.

Then a really big one from Warner Bros: Humphrey Bogart and Walter Huston in "The Treasure of Sierra Madre" which was the title under which it was released in this country. Nowadays, it is always spoken of as "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre", and one wonders why such a minor change occurred. It was the longest film of the term, running to 11,324 ft. A very fine film, but harrowing, and I would not think that anyone could say that he really enjoyed it. A coloured cartoon in that bill was "Peachy Cobbler".

Next, from M.G.M., in Technicolor, an infallible winner: Edmund Gwenn in "Master of Lassie". Donald Crisp, and any amount of other characters played their parts, and it was a treat for the young in heart of any age. A Bugs Bunny cartoon was "Garden Gopher" in colour.

Next, another musical from M.G.M. Betty Hutton in "Annie Get Your Gun". According to reports, this one had been started with Judy Garland who suddenly had one of her fits of temperament, so the footage she had made was scrapped, and Betty Hutton was borrowed from Paramount to make the picture. So far as my taste

went, Miss Hutton might have stayed where she was. The film was a fair success in the Small Cinema, but I, personally, found it a bore. A Bugs Bunny cartoon in the same bill with Annie was "Feather in his Hare".

Then, from M.G.M., another musical, this time with plenty of swimming in blue waters. This was "Neptune's Daughter" in Technicolor, starring Esther Williams and Red Skelton. I think it was pretty good, though I have no strong memory of it. A Droopy colour cartoon was "Chump Champ".

To wind up the term, Lassie was back in glowing Technicolor, with pretty

well the same cast as before in "Challenge to Lassie". I feel almost sure that this was the famous story of "Greyfriars Bobby", and, by a real coincidence, I received only yesterday a postcard of Greyfriars Bobby's statue in Edinburgh, from our Edinburgh reader, Mr. E. Thomson. A lovely picture of the sort which M.G.M. did so well in their heyday. A Bugs Bunny coloured cartoon was "Rabbit Transit" in Technicolor, and a colour Sport Parade was "Dominion of Sport".

And so another term ended in the Small Cinema.

(Another Article in this series next month.)

* * * * *

News of The Old Boys' Book Clubs

MIDLAND

The weather was good for the time of the year when we assembled at our usual venue for the second meeting of 1980. Again the attendance was good.

We began with a discussion on cigarette cards as several members had large collections. Several magazines had articles on the topic of late, thus the upsurge of interest. Bob Wareing who has a large collection, said the 1930 cricket series did not fetch very good prices in the market.

Our usual feature Anniversary Number and Collectors' item were on show. The Anniversary number was Magnet No. 107, "The Cad of the Sixth", published 26th February, 1910, and 70 years to the day. The Collectors' Item was of unusual interest - the famous No. 3A of the Collectors' Digest warning would-be buyers of Magnet, Gems, etc., not to send money on to advertisers as many people were being fleeced - sending money and getting nothing in return. Geoff Lardner

read out examples of cases, where one can only be amazed at such impudent dishonesty.

A discussion, which ranged from the subject of the much maligned "sub" writers to Frank Richards reply to George Orwell in the magazine "Horizon", brought along by Bob Wareing for members to see it, continued in a lively manner for a long time. One point raised by Tom Porter was that had it not been for the "subs" Rookwood, Cedar Creek, The Rio Kid, King of the Islands, etc., would very likely have never been written because of the time factor. Members generally agreed Rookwood was held in high esteem by all Hamilton fans.

A game, which was invented by Gerry Allison called "Located at Greyfriars, Kent", was introduced by Tom Porter. Members had to make up words relating to Greyfriars using only the letters used in the title. Geoff Lardner produced 12 names in 10 minutes, but Tom told us that someone had produced 40.

Two readings were on the programme. The first by your correspondent showed Bunter using his deadly skill as a borrower, the second by Ivan Webster showed Coker up to his high handed antics and jawing Potter and Greene to desperation.

A number of Holiday Annuals were sold to new members at £4 a copy and in excellent condition.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday, 25th March.

JACK BELLFIELD - Correspondent.

NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 8th March, 1980

Two officials were conspicuous by their absence that evening: our Treasurer/Librarian, Mollie Allison who was holidaying in Australia and our Reverend Secretary, Geoffrey Good who was at home nursing his sick wife (we hope Vera is soon better).

However, we were pleased to welcome no less than three visitors to our meeting: Mr. Frank Sykes from Huddersfield and Eric and Beryl Wafer from Newcastle, Australia - staying in England for a long holiday and spending the weekend with Darrell Swift.

Jack Allison gave the financial report, showing that the Club had a healthy bank balance.

Geoffrey Wilde then gave a humorous reading from Magnet 1143.

As we had visitors that evening and we had got through the formal business very quickly, we used the remaining time after refreshments (thanks to Jack Allison and Keith Atkinson for their catering - not forgetting Harry Barlow our official "biscuit secretary".) for a general discussion and chat - and we were pleased to hear from Eric concerning his own collection in Australia, and the friends he had made whilst in England.

Our next meeting will be on 12th April.

Eric and Beryl Wafer wish to say "thank you", through this report, for the friendships they have made and the welcome and hospitality they have received whilst in England. Ours is a fine hobby indeed.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

CAMBRIDGE

We met at the home of Bill Thurbon on Sunday, 2nd March. The Club was pleased to welcome Mr. Marriott and Mr. Groombridge, of Northampton, and also extremely glad that Mary Cadogan was able to be present.

After formal business Mike Rouse, Danny Posner and Bill Thurbon produced some collectors' items for the interest of the gathering.

Mary Cadogan gave a talk on the centenary of the Girls' Own Paper, and the commemorative volume issued to celebrate this. She illustrated this with a tape recording of an interview she had given on the Radio 4 "P.M." Programme. Mary amused and entertained the club with editorial advice given over the years to girl correspondents, including some majestic rebukes on illiteracy! She traced the G.O.P. over the years to World War 2, and mentioned the immortal "Worrals", and the Guides collection of Sphagnum Moss for wound dressings during that period.

Jack Overhill talked, interestingly as always, on Charles Hamilton, stressing how much he owed as a boy to Hamilton's writing, but expressing his surprise at Hamilton's reputed output. Speaking as an author and writer, as well as a teacher and writer of shorthand and

typing, Jack made some interesting calculations about the time required to produce the number of words attributed to Hamilton. This thoughtful talk was an item that roused much interest and suggests a need for further research.

After tea, Bill Thurbon talked on Sexton Blake, making the point that the long series of Blake stories, especially those in the "Union Jack" provided a social commentary over the years. He recalled a number of pre-1914 Union Jack titles, that recalled to Jack and himself, memories of news items of their boyhood.

Arrangements were made for the next two meetings, which will be held on 30th March and 27th April to avoid clashing with Easter and May Holidays.

LONDON

After Bill Bradford had thanked the members for electing him chairman for the ensuing year, he stated that it was an honour and then conducted a very enjoyable meeting.

Another interesting instalment of the Bill Gander-David Hobbs Transcona meeting was played through by Ray Hopkins.

Bill Bradford spoke of his purchase of some of the late Mr. Fenner's Collection. When sorted out, there may be some books and papers for sale.

Laurie Sutton, who had brought along a couple of dust jackets that will surround the covers of his forthcoming book and judging by these, the book will be a must for all hobbyists, read an extract from a Gem of 1915 which told about Figgins and Co. with the Lomax family.

Eric Lawrence's Quotations Quiz was easily won by Millicent Lyle, Roger Jenkins was in second place whilst Les Rowley, up from Penzance was in the third place. A good result from three very distinguished Hamiltonians.

"Four Footed Detectives" was the subject of a reading by Josie Packman and it was taken from a Union Jack magazine of 5th August, 1922.

A reading by Winifred Morss from Godfrey Smith's Sunday Times Feature, entitled "The Fat Man" dealt with Sexton Blake, Tarzan, Sherlock Holmes and Bunter, Greyfriars School, mentioned Wharton, Hurree Jamst Ram Singh, Linley, Redwing and Vernon-Smith.

The passage from George Orwell's essay on 'Boys' Weeklies' was in the paragraphs read and it was an enjoyable item.

Finally, Bill Bradford read out his article on the Detective Weekly.

The ladies were suitably thanked for making the tea and thus another Walthamstow gathering ended.

Luncheon party at the Rembrandt Hotel on Sunday, 13th April.

BENJAMIN WHITER

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The Postman Called

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

CHARLES CHURCHILL (Exeter): In the February C.D. you put an editorial note after Danny's Diary saying "Maybe Bloomer was the Keegan of his day". This was certainly so. He played from 1890 till 1906 and was an inside right, known today as a "striker". His clubs were Derby County and Middlesborough. He played 23 times for England and scored 28 goals, 5 of them in one match against Wales in 1896. In his career he scored 352 goals, a figure only exceeded by 6 players in this country.

MAURICE KUTNER (London): A slight correction please to W. Lister's article:- William Davies bawls his lungs out on T.V. in "It Ain't Half Hot, Mum". "Some Like it Hot" is associated with Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon in the film of that name. I've always associated Tea in the Hall (Mr. Lofts) with an Edwardian period soup kitchen for the poor. Study teas were homely, cheerful and comfortable despite the occasional burnt toast and suspicious-looking sardine. Best wishes to you, all your contributors, the C.D. and the York Duplicating Services, on the occasion of the 400th issue.

Mrs. MARY CADOGAN (Beckenham): Mr. R. G. Arnold wrote to me after reading "Do You Believe in Fairies?" in the C.D. Annual. Like so many of us, he has memories of stories that still haunt him from childhood, but whose titles are elusive. I wonder if any C.D. reader can help him? At first I thought the book in question might be one of E. Nesbit's but it doesn't quite seem to tally - unless of course

unconsciously over the years Mr. Arnold has revamped one of her stories. He says: 'When I was a child I read a story about some children, who found a magic carpet in the attic, and flew off to a strange land. The only safe ground was a hill covered in green grass, with a Union Jack flying above it. When they left England on the carpet, in the beginning of the book, someone evil tore off the label of the carpet and was able to follow them. That is all I can remember about it.'

TOMMY KEEN (Thames Ditton): I sense I am being slightly reprimanded by Laurie Sutton for my error in attributing Phyllis Howell of Cliff House to being a Pentelow character, (as I stated in the C.D. Annual 1979), but may I beg forgiveness, having gleaned this information from Page 60 of the Charles Hamilton Companion, Vol. 2 - "The Greyfriars Characters". Sorry!

Incidentally, the Greyfriars tale in Magnet No. 837 (1924), "The White Feather", featured Bob Cherry and Phyllis Howell. Am wondering now who wrote this story. Was this by G. R. Samways? (It was! - Ed.)

J.E.M. (Brighton): A special 'thank you' for last month's piece by R. Hibbert on Kabul. Witty, nostalgic, and beautifully written, it recalled other memorable articles by Mr. H. He appears too rarely. What about applying the editorial goad? The delightful diary of a Small Cinema seems to be nearing its close. It will be sadly missed. Can't you follow it up with a series of special memories of the cinema - highlights of the 'golden age' of films, as it were?

(We'll think about it when the time comes - Ed.)

B. JOHNSTON (Wirral): R. Hibbert must surely know that "Wolf of Kabul" was a "Wizard" serial - unless I missed it in "Adventure".

J. P. FITZGERALD (Manchester): C.D. is still such wonderful value. Congratulations on the imminent 400th - and may you be around to edit the next 400 (and myself to read them).

Fr. F. HERTZBERG (Wirral): Sherlock Holmes did indeed 'now and then' have 'the assistance of some boys' called The Baker-st Irregulars: 'The Baker-st division of the detective police force' assisted Holmes in

The Study in Scarlet, The Sign of Four, The Crooked Man and The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax'; and he thought well of his street arabs: as he put it in the first mentioned story, 'There's more work to be got out of one of those little beggars than out of a dozen of the force. They go everywhere and hear everything.'

R. HUNTER (Chilworth): I was interested to note the response (C.D. March) to my little bit about "A Cottage for Sale" and dear old Maurice Elwin (C.D. February). Quite right, Mr. Keen. This tune was a "hit" of 1930 - not 1928. I stand corrected. I was glad to know also that at least one other C.D. reader, Mr. Lowe, remembers Maurice Elwin with affection. After all this I take it as a matter of course that Mr. Keen, Mr. Lowe and indeed, all good C.D. readers, will have their ears glued ecstatically to their crystal sets every Wednesday evening at 8.45 p.m. (Radio 2 - sometimes V.H.F.) for Alan Dell's "The Dance Band days", otherwise I shall never forgive them! In case this should be considered by the "intelligentia" amongst us to be "much ado about nothing" I can only say that our dear, dear Editor started it all in C.D. January. Go on, Eric, you duck!

* * * * *

MERRY-GO-ROUND

by Maurice Hall

Recently I discovered a new role for Frank Richards, well at least new to our recorded list of his various published works.

Merry-Go-Round was a children's comic published by J. B. Allen of Stretford, Lancs., and printed for him by Bibby & Baron Ltd. of London and Bury, the first issue appeared on the 27th September, 1949.

Within this green and orange covered comic on page 3, readers fortunate to have a copy, will find a picture story called 'Dick and Doris', credited to 'Frank Richards, Author of Billy and Bessie Bunter Stories' (changed on the third issue to 'Creator of Billy and Bessie Bunter Stories'). The page was printed in two colours, crimson and deep red.

The story line written by Richards, was a typical tale of two children who had lost their father and were now weeking him. Each week, for four weeks, Dick and Doris had a series of separate

adventures. Week one they helped an old widow find some money that had been hidden by her husband before his death. Week two they assisted the police to catch a bank robber and afterwards get taken back to tea by the police Inspector. Week three they fall into trouble with a farmer when they trespass through his meadow and end up saving his young son from drowning in a pond. The fourth and final week, they help to find a string of valuable pearls and return them to their rightful owner.

Curiously, no mention is made about the missing father in any of the episodes, the children just seem to be wandering about the countryside without even asking anyone if they had news of their father, or heading for any particular destination.

The four issues were consecutive from the 27th September, 1949 and, as I understand it, ceased publication with the copy dated 18th October, 1949. The price of Merry-Go-Round was 2d., in line with other similar comics of that time; there were 12 pages all coloured.

If anyone turns up a copy of Merry-Go-Round, I should be delighted to see it, but I fear that most of the copies finished up in the dustbin, and the Merry-Go-Round after a short, sharp flight, was seen no more.

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ECHO OF C.D. 1960

From Jim Cook

When an old hobby friend died some 18 months ago I asked his nephew who lives at Witney to save any of our hobby books rather than throw them out. Now after all that time ago the nephew has sent me three of H. Baker's reprints and in one, Harry Wharton's Rebellion, I found a little card with the following written on it:

"Memory is the continuity of life. So far from ageing us, it keeps us young. There are, of course, especially in a long life, painful recollections that we might be glad to lose. But the man who can live his youth over again in memory will never grow really old.

When one reaches the armchair state of existence, pictures from the past take the edge off Father Time's scythe. At 70 or 80, who would choose to live wholly in the present and never in the past? Who would like to be heard saying "Oh dear, oh dear, this rheumatism", rather than "What a jolly day that was when I pulled up to Staines in 1885!"

cont'd ...

Let us keep up to date by all means, and find what pleasure we can in INCOME TAX and H. BOMBS and ATOMIC FALLOUT; but if we want to live long, and like it, let us keep our memories green."

FRANK RICHARDS

From C. D. May 1960.

I think a reprint in the C. D. would be very appropriate since nothing has changed to make us disagree with Frank Richards' sentiments.

And I'd like to add one of Sir Winston Churchill's sayings: "A nation that forgets its past can expect no future".

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THOSE THOMSON PAPERS: ANOTHER VIEW

by Tony Glynn

In recent issues of the C. D. we have had opinions on the Thomson papers expressed by JEM and E. H. Holman, neither of whom praised them particularly highly. Mr. Holman remarked that his experience of the Dundee papers was gained in first half of the nineteen-twenties and this, I think, is significant.

Both JEM and E. H. Holman declared that the AP papers were preferable to those from the Thomson stable. But there must be many of my generation, that is those who were about ten years old when the second world war broke out, who will share my recollection that, on the edge of that war, there was scarcely any contest between the two sets of publications so far as popularity was concerned: the Dundee papers won all the way.

At my school, for instance, I was probably the only youngster who read the "Magnet" regularly in 1939. I was encouraged to read it because my mother and her brothers read it in their young days and it was considered more wholesome than the Dundee papers. My memories of the last days of peace are tied up with the excitement I felt at the unfolding of the Crocker series. I simply could not get to the newsagent's quickly enough on Saturday mornings to collect my "Magnet".

Even so, I remember that the format of the "Magnet" already looked old-fashioned and the narrow columns of the single long story which took up the whole paper gave it a very different aspect from the "Wizard", "Adventure", "Hotspur", "Rover" and "Skipper", with their selections of short stories and numerous, action-packed illustrations.

In my opinion, the great days of the Thomson papers were without doubt the nineteen-thirties and nineteen-forties. I venture to suggest that, in those decades, they constituted a serious challenge to the AP papers. In the end, they continued, at least for a time, after their AP rivals had disappeared.

JEM and E. H. Holman might have trouble in recalling characters from the Dundee papers, but those who knew them in the 'thirties and 'forties, will remember names thick and fast: the Wolf of Kabul and Chung, armed with his "clicky-ba", in the "Wizard"; Strang the Terrible, "Adventure's" contribution to the Tarzan tradition and "Morgyn the Mighty", his counterpart in the "Rover"; Mustard Smith, the English schoolmaster who battled the toughs of New York City in his cap and gown in the "Skipper" and Solo Solomon, the cowboy who was somewhat misnamed, for he was always accompanied by his pals, Doc and Windy, in his exploits in the pages of the "Adventure".

Such characters were well known to my schoolmates around 1939 and I suspect that very few knew my Greyfriars friends, Wharton and Co., Bunter, Coker, Loder, Quelch, Prout and the rest.

I realise that the name of the late George Orwell will drive many a Hamiltonian away from common reason, but I ask them to bear with me for a moment. In the essay in which Orwell upset so many who were devoted to Hamilton's work, he compared a passage from a "Wizard" story about Lionheart Logan, the Mountie with a Hamiltonian yarn. He points out that, in the Logan tale, there is a great deal of action in a short space.

This, I believe, is a valid point. The Thomson tales were full of action - even if much of it was far-fetched. They were closer to the swift, visual action of the cinema, which was a strong influence on the youngsters of the 'thirties and a long way removed from the "Magnet" and "Gem" ethos where, Orwell claimed, it was always about 1910.

Perhaps the influence of the cinema can be seen in the fact that many Thomson tales were set in the United States. Apart from the cowboys, there were cops and gangsters, transplanted British schoolmasters like Mustard Smith and mischievous lads in the southern states, derived from Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

There was a vitality about the Thomson tales which was all their

own. The authors were not afraid to bring in fairy-tale elements, as in "Dr. Crusty's Rollicking Rocker" in 1940, in which the action of the rockers of a school head's rocking-chair gives off a gas which has a marked effect on his personality. In the same paper, the "Wizard", there was Dusty Dan, the dustman with a magic dustbin lid. In 1941, the "Hotspur" had a western lawman whose star had magic properties, turning him into a crack shot. Later, the "Adventure" had a lawman, trained in the ju-ju magic of Africa. He used the spells of the dark continent against lawbreakers.

Thomson science-fiction tended to follow a stereotyped pattern. Whole schools of boys were often kidnapped by invaders from space and taken off to imaginary planets. Often, there were escapes from a doomed Earth, as in the "Wizard's" "Full Speed Ahead to the Worlds of Fear" and "The Last Rocket to Venus" in the "Hotspur". Tales of this ilk were obviously popular, however, the "Quatermass" and "Dr. Who" of that pre-atomic age.

The war put the Thomson papers into an interesting position. So far as regular publications aimed at boys were concerned - that is discounting comics - they were almost alone in the field. "Magnet" and "Gem" disappeared early. The only AP boys' paper that I can recall from those years was the "Champion", with "Rockfist Rogan, RAF" as its star attraction, although I believe it absorbed "Fireworks Flynn" from its defunct stable-mate "Triumph".

Many an adult today must have memories of the variety of wartime tales in the Thomson papers mingled with his childhood recollections of Spam, ITMA and the stifling rubbery smell inside a gas-mask. The war, of course, brought forth the greatest Thomson block-buster of all: Wilson, the athlete who defied Father Time who first appeared in the "Wizard" in 1943 and who is now almost part of folk-lore.

The Thomson papers might be neglected in the pages of the CD, but they are certainly part of the lives of many of us. Perhaps they are far more important in the history of boys' papers than those tied wholly to the AP tradition think.

In the 1959 Annual, Roger Jenkins asked why the "Magnet" and "Gem" ceased so abruptly in 1940, in the middle of a series and

advertising the next week's story. He pointed out that no other AP publication ended in quite the same way and did not seem to be satisfied that the paper shortage was the whole answer.

Might it not be that these papers had already had their day so far as popular appeal went? Certainly, if they depended on my schoolmates for sales, they would have had a thin time. The Thomson papers certainly held sway in the frankly proletarian circles of the north-west wherein I moved.

Could it be that the circulation figures of the Hamilton papers at that period would reveal the truth: that the challenge from Dundee was too strong and the war gave the AP its chance to shed itself of "Magnet" and "Gem", which, in many minds, were thought of as part of the English way of life?

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THE CAPTAIN

by J. W. Doupe

When I wrote last year on the centenary of the appearance of the first copy of the Boys' Own Paper, I realised that although the C.D. Annual would still be going strong, it would be unlikely that I should be around to compile a similar article about the Captain who centenary falls due in April 1999. Nevertheless its eightyth birthday was in April of this year and perhaps a few words about it would not be inappropriate.

It was the first sixpenny monthly magazine for boys and was published by George Newnes under the editorial leadership of R. S. Warren Bell, who wrote many stories for it featuring Greyhouse School.

In my opinion it is probably the best of all the upper echelon of boys' magazines and this for a number of reasons which can be divided into two groups. The first is purely physical. The size of 9½" x 7" was admirable, being large enough to provide plenty of room for solid reading matter and also profuse illustrations. It was bound into six-monthly volumes which were not too large for the average bookshelf and moreover could be easily handled. Their weight was not too great so as to put an unendurable strain upon the hinges. Finally the paper was a good quality one and the type face used was clear. The second consideration is the excellence of the material fare provided. It started

like Chums with an historical adventure story by the same author, D. H. Parry called *The King's Red Coat* and maintained a high standard with contributions such as *The Black General* by John Buchan, *The Lost Island* by Captain Charles Gilson and many others. Its school stories were of a very high calibre, including most of the early P. G. Wodehouse stories and masterpieces from Gunby Hadath and Hylton Cleaver.

Many of its pages were devoted to sport and its first athletics editor was C. B. Fry. He was succeeded by Pelham Warner and other cricketing contributors were W. G. Grace and Jack Hobbs. Rowing was another sport which received active support and a cup for school coxed-fours was presented by the paper and contended for at the East Moseley Regatta.

It is with regret that I must confess that I am unable to claim that I read the magazine during my youth although as I was 13 in 1924 when it ceased publication, it must still have been on the bookstalls when I was devouring the *Boy's Own Paper*. It would have been beyond my means to have purchased it also, as that publication absorbed every penny of my pocket money. So the first part of the sub-heading, "A Magazine for Boys and Old Boys" does not apply to me, but, I think that I may justly come within the orbit of the second part. I was introduced to it first by my old friend, Norman Shaw and it came about in this wise. I had been making a study of the works of Herbert Strang and had been quite unable to find anywhere a copy of "The Old Man of the Mountain" and during this period Norman had been endeavouring to awaken my interest in the *Captain* but I had ignored his repeated claims of its excellence. Finally he persuaded me to buy Volume 31 which contains this story as a serial. It so happened that this was just prior to my going on holiday and as something to read, I included this volume in my baggage. I found it entrancing and during a fortnight, I read it almost from cover to cover. When I returned, I had resolved to acquire the complete set of 50 volumes if that was humanly possible, with a preference for publishers bindings. A call at Mr. Shaw's emporium provided a good few numbers, but it was some five years before I obtained the final volume, No. 39. Only three are in non-uniform coats. They are a delight to the eye and a source of perpetual interest

to the reader. It was aimed almost exclusively at the Public Schoolboy and its circulation was therefore limited. After the 1914-18 war, it was unable to compete with rising costs and a falling advertising revenue and finally ceased publication in March 1924. It did not have the capacity to adapt itself to altering circumstances like the B.O.P. and having followed that publication to its demise, I cannot say that The Captain was wrong.

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WANTED: pre-1946 Boys' Papers, comics, comic annuals, bound volumes, Picture Post, War Illustrated 1914-1919.

MALLETT, 24 BATCHELORS BARN ROAD, ANDOVER, HAMPSHIRE.

* * * * *

Can anybody help me with a copy of WILLIAM THE LAWLESS by Richmal Crompton? I have pre-war William books with dust jackets for sale or exchange.

DARRELL SWIFT, 22 WOODNOOK CLOSE, LEEDS, LS16 6PQ.

* * * * *

DEAR PRINCESS SNOWEE --

Dear Princess Snowee,

I have long been an interested reader of your doings, and now venture to set paw to paper to acquaint you with myself. My name is Webster Horrible Hunt and I am a Pedigree Silver Tabby Persian (I can lick any dog in the road). I do so agree with you about sitting on things, personally, I never recognise anything as belonging to the house until it has been thoroughly sat upon. The other day that minister fellow brought some picture papers called 'Rainbow' which had a most satisfactory texture and just fitted my elegant form - I still cannot see why she was so annoyed. I then moved to the sideboard and sat on a reference she had just written - more trouble, honestly I sometimes wonder if it is worth while trying to civilise these poor creatures. At the moment I am engaged in sitting on a new Japanese stereo turntable which he has just set up in the living room. It is not what you would call comfortable mind, and my hind legs keep slipping off, but after all it is the principle of the thing which matters isn't it?

Yours very sincerely,
WEBSTER H. HUNT