

Story Paper

PRICE  
**32** p

# COLLECTORS

VOLUME  
35

# DIGEST

NUMBER  
419

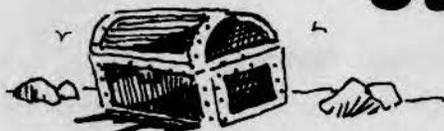
NOVEMBER 1981

**35**<sup>TH</sup>

Birthday No.



## Coral Jubilee



Still some bargains left - also 50 Pilots from £30 (my selection) and Young Britain, 50 for £20.

Just back from Book binders - newly bound Thomsons, Adventure, Rover, Hotspurs, Wizard, post war in complete year and half-year volume. Fine cloth covers, gilt lettering on spine, as new!

SBL's. All series, including 20 Vols. (approx. 6 per Vol.) of 1st series, complete with original covers. New purchase.

Hendersons Wild West Library in magnificent  $\frac{1}{2}$  leather bound volumes, v.g.c. 14 vols., two in loose copies. From Vol. No. 1. The lot, £178. The bindings alone would cost over £25 each now! Large collection of bound "Penny Dreadfuls" acquired.

Lots of other bargains. I might give you a price for a quantity buy of my selection regards particular numbers.

Prices are likely to go up next year, so get in on the good stuff before then!

The usual complete selection of Howard Baker Facsimiles including the Book Club specials.

Your wants list appreciated, but please chase me from time to time. Remember, satisfaction always!

# NORMAN SHAW

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Nearest Station (B.R.) Crystal Palace

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**STORY PAPER**

# COLLECTORS DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by  
W. G. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by  
HERBERT LECKENBY

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Vol. 35

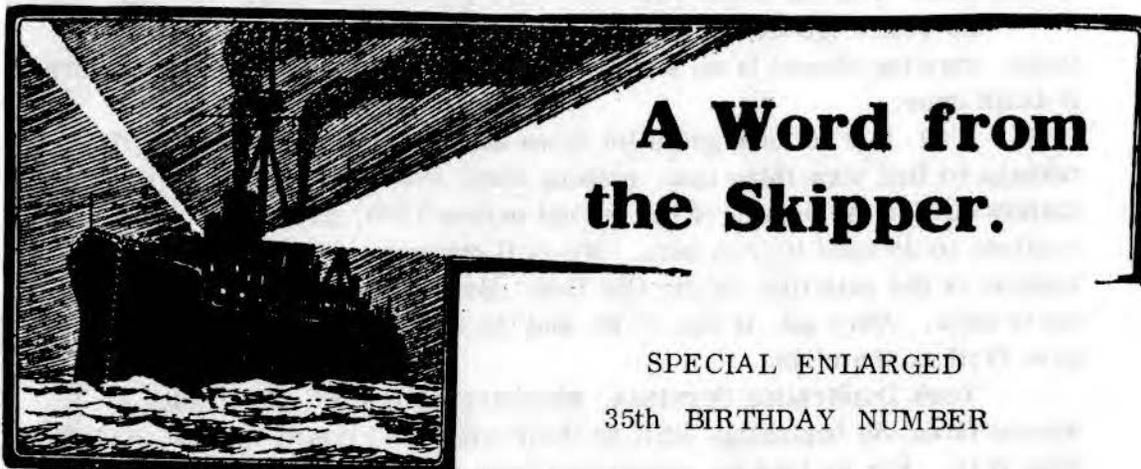
No. 419

NOVEMBER 1981

Price 32p

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## A Word from the Skipper.

SPECIAL ENLARGED

35th BIRTHDAY NUMBER

### CORAL JUBILEE

Why Coral? You may well ask. The answer is that I just don't know. Way back in the few years prior to the first World War, those lovely old papers for girls - Girls' Friend, Girls' Reader, and Girls' Home - which figure fairly extensively in my own collection - used to give, in their editorial columns, from time to time, a list of the various anniversaries. Every few months the list would be repeated, so, presumably, there was a demand for it.

Most of them were well known. 25 years, the Silver Jubilee.

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50 years, the Golden one. 60 years, the Diamond. One almost as well known is the Ruby Jubilee at 40 years. Less used is the Pearl Jubilee at 30 years - the one that we, at the C.D., celebrated just five years back.

With our 35th birthday approaching, I asked myself whether there is a proper name for it. So I went to those lovely old books which charmed our grandmas. I didn't have to look far. There it was - 35 years - Coral Jubilee.

A bit surprising, I thought. Silver is precious, rubies are worth a lot, gold is very valuable, and diamonds are a girl's best friend.

But it never occurred to me before that coral was worth much. It does now. For the Coral represents 35 remarkable years of C.D.

35 years ago this month, Herbert Leckenby sent out the first issue, starting almost from scratch. He didn't have anybody else's work to build upon.

C.D. has not changed a lot down the tumbling years. We still manage to find something new, nothing blue, every month. C.D. still mainly covers the papers of the period before 1940, and that it will continue to do until its sun sets. We still manage to find space for brief reports of the activities of the Old Boys' Book Clubs, just as in the very early days. After all, it was C.D. and the enthusiasm it aroused that gave birth to the clubs.

York Duplicating Services, who have been the C.D. printers almost from the beginning, still do their wonderful share in making C.D. what it is. For so long we associated them with that historic York thoroughfare, the Shambles. They are no longer in the Shambles - nowadays they are part of a large concern. But they go on with the splendid work we know we shall always get from them, and it is a matter of real joy that my very dear friend, Mr. Ken Gore-Browne, is still managing affairs, just as he did in the old days. Long may he continue to do so.

Mary Pickford, once, wrote her autobiography under the title "Sunshine & Shadow". If ever I took on the monumental task of writing the story of my 22 years on the Skipper's bridge of C.D., that also might make an apt title.

But the sunshine has always been far, far more in evidence than the shadow, as the years have sped by, faster and faster. Today it is

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more popular than it has ever been, and it will carry on while its readers want it.

As with Herlock Sholmes, in contest with Professor Hickorychicory (pronounced Hickychicky) my life, as your editor, is in constant danger. Recently I was charged £1.50 for an all-black type-writer ribbon in a W.H. Smith shop. I nearly dropped dead on the spot. Some readers, when they write to me, persist in stapling things together. I get smothered with blood in trying to remove the staples. I am in danger of dying from chronic anaemia.

Elementary, my dear Princess Snowee.

All joking ended. My thanks first to my wonderful readers, all over the Wide, Wide World. Thank you for your loyalty, which is, perhaps the most important. Thank you for your affection and your encouragement. Thank you, all our contributors, who help to keep the wheels turning. (Does anyone still remember - was it "Budge"? - in an old tale called "Helen's Babies" - who liked to see the "wheels go wound!")

Finally - a loving thank you to my beloved "Madam" (and she is your beloved "Madam", too, if your stacks of letters are anything to go by) - who is always there to cheer me on my way and to lend a hand when, as often happens, she is needed. Speaking of "Madam" I can only echo Jane in "Cavalcade" and say "Loyal and loving always".

Thank you - everyone - on our 35th Birthday.

#### IT DIDN'T SEEM THE SAME --

In a delightful little item in this month's S.P.C.D., Mr. Norman Kadish comments on what happened when there were changes of artists, after many years, in long-running series. How right he is! I remember loving Dreamy Daniel as a child - and then being sadly disappointed when I came on Dreamy, drawn by a different artist, many years on. Because everybody associated Macdonald with St. Jim's, it is likely that Warwick Reynolds, Briscoe, and some others may have had less than justice when they turned up in the Gem. Because one always associated Chapman and Shields with Greyfriars, there always seemed to be something wrong when Mac illustrated the earlier Bunter books. And Chapman seemed wildly out of place when we found him on the covers of the St. Jim's Goldhawk series.

As for Tom & Jerry, in the cinemas, they always seemed far inferior after new artists took them on. You never saw human faces in the heyday of those gorgeous cartoons - just some black lady's legs wobbling on a stool or waddling across a room. The new men showed the whole of human beings, and things were never the same again. Luckily the changes did not come till after the Small Cinemas had passed on.

### THE 1981 C.D. ANNUAL

So far I have not screened the customary "trailer" to show you what is in store for you in the new Annual, due in December. So here goes.

Leslie Rowley's "School for All Seasons" is Greyfriars, of course. It is superbly constructed, and the opening pages, in which Mr. Rowley takes us around the school and its neighbourhood, comprise one of the most delightful passages that we have ever published. It will be a real joy for all who love Greyfriars.

Mary Cadogan's contributions to our Year Book are always charming, but this year she surpasses herself with a stunning essay on "Cats in Fiction". You will love it - and you will love the pictures accompanying it. A C.D. Annual without Roger Jenkins well to the fore would be almost unthinkable, and this year his contribution on "Paul Pontifex Prout" must figure among the best things he has ever given us. And that's saying a hatful, as the Rio Kid would observe.

Nic Gayle is on the top of his form with a fine article which has the intriguing title "A Greyfriars Guide to St. Frank's", and no Annual would be complete without a loving look at the much-loved St. Frank's by our old friend, Jim Cook.

Harold Truscott, whose essays are so much enjoyed, is outstanding this year with a comparison of a St. Jim's series and one of Greyfriars, in both of which a similar plot is used.

Christopher Lowder is with us to delight Sexton Blake fans with a remarkable article concerning Blake writers and artists, and John Bridgwater uses his immense knowledge of the great detective to produce yet another excellent item on Sexton Blake.

Jack Overhill is present with a lovely, warm-hearted little

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fantasy entitled "The Dove". Roy Parsons takes a masterful look at the St. Jim's Goldhawk series of stories.

Mr. Buddle is back in a new adventure of Slade entitled "A Matter of Principle". Any amount of readers have asked for another run for "Pongo", the terrier which Mr. Buddle adopted last year. So Pongo comes back for a second romp. Our cover, as usual, comes from our gifted and gorgeous artist, Henry Webb. And, of course, there is still more. It is impossible to list everything.

Just a warning. We can only, in these hard times, print sufficient copies to supply those who have ordered in advance. Last year, a good many readers came along too late. We are very near the deadline. Have you reserved your copy yet? THE EDITOR

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# DANNY'S DIARY

NOVEMBER 1931

In the recent General Election, which produced a National Government, the Liberals did very badly indeed. Mr. Lloyd George, who has led the Liberals since the year dot, has resigned and has gone to Ceylon for a holiday. The new leader of the Liberals is Sir Herbert Samuel.

The first story in the Gem this month is "The Gunpowder Plot at St. Jim's", and it is a Guy Fawkes' Day story. In the next story "The Football Fake", Tom Merry got his chance to play for the First Eleven when Sefton of the Sixth let the School down against Redclyffe.

Next "The Schoolboy Smugglers" in which Tom Merry is ill and in the sanny, and his pals smuggle food into him. Last of the month is "Easy Terms for the Saints" in which a rascal named Jex comes round selling things to the boys on the instalment system. The goods are no good, but the payments go on, until the chums deal with Jex.

The short Rookwood tales this month in the Gem are "Lovell's Painful Prank" (Lovell invites everyone to sample a farmer's apples); "No Catch for Manders", another tale with Lovell in the limelight; "The

"Ghost of Rookwood" in which Jimmy Silver disappears; and "The Prisoner of the Vaults". These tales are not by the real Owen Conquest of the old days, and they're a bit thin.

The daftest feature in the Gem is a regular item which gives the results of football matches each week, and bring in the names of boys who are not at St. Jim's now.

On 11th November, there was the usual Armistice ceremony at the Cenotaph, but it was too cold for the King to be present, and the Prince of Wales laid a wreath, representing the King.

Two simply lovely tales in the Schoolboys' Own Library this month. "The Fool of the Fifth" is, of course, Coker. The man in black, named Poynings, who is the secretary to Coker's uncle, comes to suggest to Coker that he should not go home to Holly Lodge for Christmas. Coker shows him the door. And then Coker disappears. The second part of this one will be next month.

"The Fighting Schoolboy" is the tale of Oliver Lynn, the schoolboy pug who once fought professionally as the "Chicken" and who is the relative of St. Leger of the Fifth. One of the best dramatic St. Jim's stories of all time, and very touching in parts.

An aeroplane has travelled from England to Cape Town in five days, and this is a record.

We went to Balham Hippodrome one evening and saw a tip-top revue on the stage. This was Billy Merson in "Happy Snaps". Billy Merson is a funny little man and a good comedian. He sang "The Spaniard who blighted my life", which is a fairly old song, and he also sang "The photo of the girl I left behind" which had us all roaring with laughter.

In the third week of the month in the Modern Boy, George Rochester's series of school stories about Greystones have ended after a long run. I suppose there may be another series of them, but I didn't really like them a lot. They have been replaced by a flying series "The Air Musketeers" by Capt. Frank Shaw. And Alfred Edgar is nearly always there in the motor-racing tales.

I had one Union Jack, early this month. It contained "The Fifth Stair" by Anthony Skene, and it was exciting and introduced Inspector Coutts.

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A fairly good month in the local cinemas. We saw Gary Marsh and Ann Todd in "Keepers of Youth" which is a kind of throw-off from the success of "Young Woodley" and is about senior boys at school. The Headmaster says to a parent: "We are the keepers of youth, Mr. Venner". Hoot Gibson was in his first talkie "The Gay Buckeroo", but I am not sure that talk doesn't slow down western films, though it is nice to hear the gallop of horses' hooves. Janet Gaynor and Warner Baxter in "Daddy Longlegs" which was a kind of Cinderella story. Matheson Lang in "Carnival". Benita Hume, Ursula Jeans and Henry Kendall in "The Flying Fool", a British picture. Elissa Landi and Lewis Stone in "Always Goodbye". And finally a splendid gangster film "Quick Millions", starring Spencer Tracy.

In parliament they have passed a bill against "dumping" which is to stop cheap foreign goods being dumped in Britain for sale.

The Magnet kicked off the month with a Guy Fawkes Day story "All the Fun of the Fifth" which is full of fun and games and original bits. Next "The Boot-Boy's Luck". Eric Carlow is a new boy at Greyfriars (fancy starting as a new boy at school just after Guy Fawkes Day). Carlow deals with Nugent Minor, and thereby finds an enemy in Nugent Major. But Frank Nugent overhears Carlow talking to a wretch named Hookey, and suspects that Carlow may be under a false name. Then "Foes of the Remove". The foes are Carlow and Nugent, but a life or death adventure makes them the best of friends.

Next week brought "Coker's Football Fever", and Wingate is saved from a horrible doom in a fall over a cliff.

Not quite the best of months in the Magnet, but pretty good.

First tale of the month in the Nelson Lee is "Handforth the Guy", with all the usual fireworks and fun at St. Frank's. Then "St. Frank's in Disgrace", when war is declared between the St. Frank's chums and the Bannington boys. The town becomes a battle ground, and the police have to take a hand. This is the start of a new series, and Nipper's fun and games in Bannington cause his downfall.

Next week brought "Pep for the Saints" in which an American boy, Ulysses Spencer Adams, becomes the "big boss" of the Remove. Final of the month is "The Schoolboy Racketeer" in which Hubbard stands up to Adams, and has his hair cut off as a punishment. And then the

whole form rises against the awful Adams.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Some issues of the Schoolboys' Own Library were far from satisfactory, but there could be no complaint about those which Danny read in November 1931. No. 159, "The Fool of the Fifth" comprised the first two stories from the Magnet Christmas 4-story series of 1926, probably the best Coker yarn of all time. The two yarns fitted snugly into the S. O. L. No. 160, "The Fighting Schoolboy" comprised the 4-story Schoolboy Series of the Gem of 1923. The Gem stories were fairly short at that time, and the reprint got by with only minor pruning.

The Gem tale, "The Gunpowder Plot at St. Jim's" was "Spoofed" in 1907; "The Football Fake" was "Playing the Game" in 1907; "The Schoolboy Smugglers" was originally "Tom Merry in Trouble"; and "Easy Terms for the Saints" (the title was obviously editorial in 1931, for Hamilton himself rarely, if ever, used the term "saints" though the subs did on occasion) was "A Regular Rascal" in 1907.

The film "Quick Millions" gave Spencer Tracy his first starring part.)

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# BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

I do hope all my Blake readers will enjoy the article this month written by Chris Lowder. It is certainly something on different lines than usual and I for one, appreciate the time and trouble Chris has spent on writing it.

I would be grateful for articles written for the New Year, so please will some of you get out your pens and papers and think up something to write about, one of your favourite characters would do nicely.

## NUTS AND BOLTS

by Christopher Lowder

It seems to me that a true appreciation and understanding of one's favourite writers (whether in the highways or the byways of literature) may only be gained by seeing, not simply the facade but the nuts and bolts behind that facade. Often, these nuts and bolts may be utterly trivial -- indeed, banal -- in themselves, yet all have their place in the final construction.

What has sparked this off was the chance purchase, some months ago, of a batch of manuscripts, letters, personal papers and other literary detritus that once belonged to one of my personal favourites amongst Sexton Blake writers, the late Clifford Gibbons, or 'Gilbert

Chester'.

For the most part they are made up of SBL blacks (that is, carbon copies). These are mostly incomplete and there are, alas, none earlier than the very late-1930's, but also included are a number of SBL, UJ and DW story-synopses (some going back to the mid-1920's), and a good sprinkling of non-Blake material (both serials and shorts, detective and romance fiction). There are, too, some letters to and from various editors at the Amalgamated Press, which provide a fascinating glimpse of the realities of the professional writer's existence (and certainly Chester was a thorough-going pro -- he even used the backs of old carbon copies for new carbon copies).

However, it was amongst the mass of miscellaneous papers -- which included personal letters, old fuel bills, a roughed-out horoscope for George Teed (Chester was keenly interested in astrology), and so on -- that I came across an item that, more than anything else, struck me, as a freelance writer of similar bent, with a sense of *déjà-vu*, not to mention *plus-ça-change*.

Four sheets of paper. On the first two, work-done-and-paid-for; on the second, expenses.

Ah, yes. How often has one sat down and engaged in precisely the same exercise, frantically juggling the figures so that some semblance of a profit emerges at the end. Sometimes one gazes at the result with the happy smile of one who knows that at last that stretch of dodgy guttering can be fixed, the chimney re-pointed, a new fridge bought -- and it really does look like it's going to be a holiday this year. At other times one simply cannot understand why the bums are not already pounding at the front door.

For Chester, happily, 1927 (the year, or part of the year, in question) seems to have been reasonably successful. On the surface, anyhow.

Unfortunately, I'm unable to correlate the figures exactly as certain sheets are clearly missing. All I have is an itemised list of expenses for the first seven months of 1927, and a list of stories written and paid for during the period August-December of the same year.

It should be remembered that Chester, like most of his colleagues, played the field. Although the bulk of his work was done

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for Harold Twyman of the Union Jack and Len Pratt of the SBL, he also wrote for Addington Symonds and other AP boys' paper group-editors, as well as for D. C. Thomson, and certain of the AP women's papers (one of his main markets in this respect was the Violet Magazine edited by Pratt; Teed, Gwyn Evans and Coutts Brisbane also contributed fairly prolifically).

From August to December of 1927 Chester had written, and been paid for, three SBLs (at £60 a time), two UJs (at £28 each) and eleven short stories (five at 11 guineas, and six at 12 guineas). His total wordage for this period was well over a quarter of a million (roughly 274,000 words) and his gross takings were £366-4-0 (£366.20). With income tax at a quarter (around 4/6d. in the pound) we may arrive at a rough net figure of £274.65 earned in five months.

His expenses make fascinating reading. A ream of quarto in 1927 cost 2/6d. (12½p), as did a gallon of petrol. Oil for the study heater came to £1-10-0 (presumably over the entire period), a type-writer cleaning brush 9d., gum and ink (in unknown quantities) 1/6d. and 2/6d. respectively, a box of carbons 2/-, and he spent £1-5-6 (£1.27½) on stamps. His main expenses were incurred making trips up to town, roughly two a month, and the overall cost of one of these (to include, one assumes, train-fares, tubes or buses, food and so on) was £1-17-0 (£1.85). The total for the period Jan. - July 1927, comes to £33-4-7d. (£33.23).

We may, to a certain extent, extrapolate a full year's income from these figures, and, taking income tax and expenses into account, arrive at a figure of something approaching £600 per annum.

On paper, this looks pretty good, especially when one considers that the average income per annum in the late-1920's was roughly £180. However, that figure does not take into account living expenses and non-tax deductible expenses. At this time, Chester was maintaining a wife and at least one child (possibly two), a house and a car, and also an aged mother in a separate establishment, as well as (from what I can gather) a younger brother who was living in Ireland. There must also have been a number of 'invisible' commitments of one sort or another, because, in a letter written to his brother less than two years later, in 1929, he admits that he is "paying out the whole time as hard as the money comes

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in", and, such is the pressure of work -- and, indeed, the need to work -- that, apart from 14 days in 1926, he has not had a holiday (that is, a complete let-up, as opposed to a holiday with the typewriter in the boot of the car) for eight years.

Such then are some of the bare bones of the writer's life -- the nuts and bolts behind the facade, so rarely considered by those to whom the writer himself gives the ultimate pleasure: a fantasy world of thrills and romance and danger, where all will turn out right in the end and the taxman cometh not.

Certainly, there appear to be no appalling disasters here to be taken into account when viewing Chester's output at this time (although that is not to say that such did not occur); only slog and more slog. But still, for me, Chester has suddenly emerged from the past as a being of flesh and blood, rather than merely a name and a large body of work. And there is no doubt that he has become a far more sympathetic figure, because of this, than many another and more highly regarded writer whose works I may enjoy, but about whom I know next to nothing.

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## NELSON LEE COLUMN

### THE EXPLOITS OF TRACKETT GRIM - DETECTIVE ?

by Bob Blythe

One of the most popular features in the Old Series of the Nelson Lee was undoubtedly the St. Frank's Magazine, which ran, with various breaks, from No. 338, (the first 2d. issue in Nov. 1921) until No. 512 in 1925.

Of all the features presented, which were many and varied, the most popular, among today's readers, are the Trackett Grim stories. These hilarious spoofs, all of which were written by Brooks, (as indeed were most of the contents of the St. Frank's magazine, for Brooks has told us so), were, I am sure, meant as a take-off of any detective and his boy assistant appearing in boys' papers of the period. What they are not meant to be, I am sure, is a take-off of Sherlock Holmes.

As I have said, these stories were written by Brooks, and it shows a completely different aspect of his qualities as an author. This is his obvious sense of the ridiculous and his ability to describe the most outrageous impossibilities in a manner in which the supposed author, i.e. Handforth, considers to be a thoroughly ripping and gripping yarn.

It is quite a coincidence that Bill Lofts, in his letter to the C.D. last month, should suggest a list of the Trackett Grim stories be given because of various requests that had been made to him, for I too have had the suggestion put to me in the past, and have, in fact, given such a list to the enquirer on a couple of occasions. Unfortunately, I did not keep a copy, and so, purely as a labour of love, and in the hope that such a list can be put to some practical use, it has been compiled again. For those of you who possess a copy of the E. S. Brooks Bibliography, it might be a good idea to make a copy of this list and paste it within the pages of same, thus adding to its comprehensiveness.

For the benefit of those who have not had the pleasure of reading these classics (or for those who have, for that matter), of farce and improbabilities, our worthy editor has agreed to retell some of these yarns in the coming months. To quote the catch phrase of a famous comedian - 'You lucky people'!

### TRACKETT GRIM STORIES

#### IN THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY

O. S.	349	The case of the vanished typewriter
"	350	The case of the cocaine fiend
"	351	The black terror of Blackheath
"	352	The case of the red pirates
"	353	The capture of Blue-nosed Harry
"	354	The case of the Rajah's ripping ruby
"	355	Cunning Carl, the coiner king
"	356	The man with the green nose
"	359	The case of the pinched painting
"	360	Greased Lightning's greatest race
"	362/5	The Brotherhood of the Squashed Nose
"	382/3	The Thornton Heath mystery
"	443	The clue of the torn pyjamas
"	445	The last of the old guys
"	451	Marmaduke Mutt, the Midnight Mail Marauder
"	454	The trail of the missing island
"	455	The mystery of the purloined pearls

O. S.	456	The Fulham Furnishing mystery
"	457	The Pink Eye of Put
"	459	The frightful Phantom of Finchley Forest
"	460	Hooded Herbert, the Highway Horror
"	461	Daring David, the bag snatcher demon
"	462	Hunched-back Hiram, the Houndsditch hustler
"	463	Hare-lipped Sidney, the Stepney steeple-jack
"	464	The evil Easter egg from Ealing End
"	467/8	Cunning Carl, the cowboy crook
"	469	The case of the bullet-proof man
"	470	The case of the missing millionaire
"	471	Lost in the Pacific
"	472	The case of the doped race-horse
"	473	The terror of Texas
"	475	The robbery at Dudchester Hall
"	476	The affair of the Professor's monoplane
"	477	Dashed to destruction
"	478	The haunted Colonel
"	479	The case of the burgled basement
"	480	The blackmailed Baronet
"	481	The man with the heart-shaped scar
"	482	The missing beachcomber
"	483	The affair of the missing athlete
"	484	Fearsome Fred, the false teeth find
"	485	The murder in the Muddy Marsh
"	488/494	The sign of the scarlet shadow
"	499	The lost man from the land beyond the snow (A poem)
"	508/512	The yellow terror
1st N. S.		
67/72		Trackett Grim's greatest case

(All of the above stories were written by E. S. Brooks)

The following were, I am certain, not written by Brooks. Possibly a sub-editor, or whoever was responsible for the so-called 'Handforth's Weekly'.

2nd N. S.

66/70	Trackett Grim - master criminal
" 77	The motor bandits
" 90	'Popped' off
" 95	The secret spider
" 102	Grim. Grub grabber
" 119/120	Trackett Grim's sacrifice

HALF A REPRINT

by R. J. Godsave

The reprint of the Dick Goodwin series in the Monster Library under the title of "The Boy who Vanished" is remarkable for what had

been omitted from the original Nelson Lee Library. In many of the earlier Lee stories E. S. Brooks wrote two themes into the same story. One was devoted to the detective activities of Nelson Lee and the other to the school. Generally there was a link between the two.

The arrival of Dick Goodwin - the Lancashire Lad - occurred in o. s. 275 "The Study of Mystery". Being the inventor of an improved textile machine, Goodwin was permitted by Dr. Stafford to have complete privacy in order to work on a model of his invention. Complete privacy meant frosted glass windows and a secure lock on the study door. This was much to the chagrin of his fellow Removites who could not understand why he should be treated so differently from the usual run of new boys.

Even the latter part of o. s. 275 the first Nelson Lee in the series was not used in the Monster Version as it introduced the detective element which had no place at this stage in the school story. Two men, one of whom had recently been in the employ of Goodwin's father in his textile mill was a Mr. Naggs who with an accomplice named Colmore had made an attempt to steal the plans of the machine from Goodwin's study with the help of Ralph Leslie Fullwood of the Remove.

It was the entry into St. Frank's one night which caused Colmore to be captured by two men who actually had no connection with the Dick Goodwin part of the story. Both Naggs and Colmore had been cornered by Nelson Lee and had only escaped by smashing through some panels in the Remove passage. Naggs made his way to the domestic quarters and escaped into the lane. Colmore in his panic rushed upstairs and entered a room in which the door had been left open. Not knowing that it was Nelson Lee's bedroom he rushed to the window and threw up the sash looking for a pipe or strong ivy in order to descend to the ground. As he looked out of the window a thin loop of rope came circling down. It swung itself over his head and shoulders, and with a sharp jerk it became tight. Colmore was then lifted right off his feet and swung clean out of the window and into the air. Then with a swiftness that was startling he was lowered to the ground.

That the persons who had captured Colmore had really intended to capture Nelson Lee was obvious. With Colmore left bound on the ground, the man who had been with the rope on the roof now joined his

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companion by sliding down on a rope tied to a chimney stack. They soon found that they had captured the wrong man and made their escape into the darkness. When Nelson Lee appeared on the scene he found Colmore bound and helpless and in a state of shock. In these circumstances it was easy to hand him over to the police.

This is where the two themes meet, and whoever edited the Monster Library version of this series had no option but to keep Colmore 'alive' as it were for some time longer. In the original Lees Colmore was no longer in the story and his place as an accomplice of Naggs was taken by one named Williss. This name was never used in the Monster Library and Colmore was granted a new lease of life although captured by the police later on in the story it no longer mattered.

The gang who had tried to capture Nelson Lee turned out to be jewellery thieves who had designs on Lady Banningstowe's collection of jewels. In this case Nelson Lee was successful in preventing the theft.

This is an instance of where two themes clash which must make a genuine reprint of the school activities impossible.

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THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE C.D.

by W. O. G. Lofts

Many Happy Returns to the C.D. on its 35th Birthday. I can well remember writing my very first article in its pages in December 1952, entitled 'Cecil Ponsonby of Greyfriars School' - so in a way this also celebrates almost thirty years of my own connection with this paper, that has given uncountable pleasure to so many, many people.

Even now I consider myself a newcomer to such old timers as - our editor, Roger Jenkins, Bob Blythe, Josie Packman, Ben Whiter - and others who were in at the beginning. All without exception writing without thought of gain, and even if one disagreed at times, one cannot take away the fact, that they all without exception as myself have one thing in common. A great love for the hobby, and I'm always grateful for the kind remarks, interest and encouragement that readers have shown to me over the years - that has enabled me to branch out into all spheres of literature - but my first love is the C.D.

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SALE: Children's Annuals and books, some Magnets/Gems. List 25p. Cheque/P.O. deductible against order.

JOHN BECK, 29 MILL ROAD, LEWES, SUSSEX.

# A word to the Skipper.



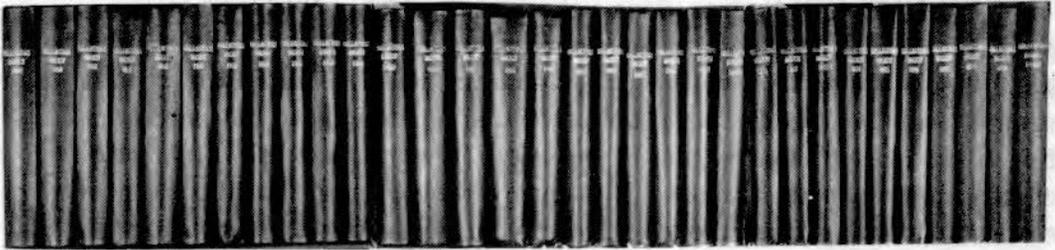
Dear Skipper,

Every year I hand a sheaf of brightly coloured copies of the Collector's Digest, together with a more sedate Christmas Annual, to my faithful bookbinder accompanied by those time honoured words, "The same again." Although long since retired and visibly ageing, he labours on, leaving me to gaze on my remaining shelf-space, and wondering if we can cope with your undiminished output!

The Gem and Magnet lasted thirty-two years and this was much longer than most boys' books, but you have passed this total without any signs of slackening, and only the Boys Own Paper looms ahead with the longest run of all.

As one publisher to another, I am more than familiar with the lengthy series of tribulations that can assail an editor, added to which long list you have a date-line, a nightmare from which I never suffered.

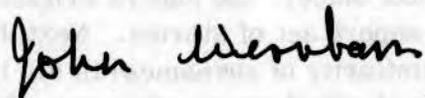
It is unlikely that Herbert could have dreamed of such a future during those stark days in 1948 when even the 'study tea' was a problem to be reckoned with!



Looking back over the years we have a remarkable wealth of material always available for the student of boys' books that is unmatched in the field of literature. Comment, analysis, controversy - an endless flow of informative entertainment that never ceases to claim an ever-loyal readership.

But, enough has been said. This month of November, in 1981 marks the Coral Year of our publication and on behalf of all members of the Old Boys' Book Club, not forgetting our many friends here and overseas, I extend to you our greeting, and thanks, for your long service in the Editorial Chair. The Club owes much to the work of our leading members but, it is the monthly C. D. and the Annual at Christmas time that is to be found in the vanguard, and shall receive the highest award.

Yours very sincerely,



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SALMON VERSUS THE GOLDEN PERIOD

by M. M. Hall

Salmon in this case does not mean the fish. It refers to the Magnets 1553 to 1683, when the familiar orange/yellow and blue covers were discontinued on the 13th of November, 1937. The editorial idea, it seems, was to go back to the colour of the old Magnets that ran from No. 1 to No. 396, that is, until the 1914-18 war caused the first major change to the weekly issues. It is interesting to note that the salmon cover did not approach the rich 'red' of the old Magnet. No colour match here, but it was, no doubt, much cheaper to produce than the two colour copies it replaced.

However, what I would like to bring to your attention, is that the 131 salmon copies issued up to No. 1683, have been played down in comparison to their more illustrious brothers in the Golden period covering 1922 or 1925 to 1937. It has been said that the salmon period was like water unto wine, but I think that this is not entirely true and will endeavour to explain why.

The Golden period of over thirteen years, produced some superb Christmas stories - Cavandale Abbey, The Ghost of Mauleverer Towers, Polpelly (my own favourite) and of course The Courtfield Cracksman must not be forgotten.

But compare with those - Lord Bunter of Raynham Castle, The Mystery of Wharton Lodge and the Phantom of Moat House, all of these written within a period of two-and-a-half years, the Golden period stretched over thirteen years ... Mentally, give the Raynham Castle series coloured covers and the Mauleverer Towers stories salmon covers, which then would be considered the best?

The school/sport stories are even more interesting to evaluate. Take Stacey, the superb cricketer in 1935, those lovely coloured covers, a superb set of stories. Next think of Gilbert Tracy (a curious similarity of surnames) in the 1938 football series. Both plots were about gifted sports players, gifted almost beyond belief, but lacking in sportsmanship - that had to be learnt at Greyfriars. Would Tracy have had the impact that Stacey did, if he had appeared in 1935? Would Stacey have been considered a pale shadow of Tracy if he had appeared in 1938? How about coloured Tracy covers and salmon Stacey covers?

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Mystery stories in the salmons are all overshadowed by the Randolph Croker series which contains a marvellous moment when Larry Lascelles defeats Croker in fisticuffs. Earlier Croker, in his turn, had caused others of the Greyfriars staff, some painful moments. A really splendid piece of descriptive writing. The Golden period offers several excellent series - Ravenspur Grange, The Courtfield Cracksman, Lancaster, Dick the Penman and Bob Cherry Kidnapped are some of the major ones, but none I think are better than the Croker tales.

Holiday series find a particular spot in my affections. The salmon copies had two I liked very much for different reasons. The first is the South Seas series in 1938, which although another version of the 1927 plot, was nicely built round Lord Mauleverer and his beach-comber cousin Brian. Mauly is one of the great Hamilton creations, one who brings a curious mixture of laziness, even lethargy, definite charm, and then unexpectedly, a burst of action as he takes control, only to sink back on his sofa when the matter is resolved. I liked this adventure because I first read the Magnet at this time.

The second was that lovely "Water Lily" series in the summer of 1939. The feel of the river was there, even the wet days and nights. A set of stories to read again and again ...!

The Golden period produces so many - India - China - Hollywood - Trail of the Trike - Africa - Egypt - The Hikers to name but a few. I've left one salmon series out - the Texas series, because I really didn't enjoy it - but then I didn't really enjoy the Brazil series either. In both stories I felt that Hamilton had not put his heart into them, or perhaps the editor may have written some parts himself - they just did not ring true.

Pure school stories in the last 131 copies were few - Carter, Bunter's Rich Relation was one, Bertie Vernon another, a few single copies and short series made up the balance, which is not much to put up against the Golden periods - Bob Cherry - Swot, Paul Dallas, Da Costa, "Tatters", "Flip", Harry Wharton versus Mr. Quelch - one could go on and on. But let us not lose sight of the two periods concerned. The Golden period of thirteen years and around 670 copies and the Salmon period of 2½ years and 131 copies. The difference in scope is obvious, the comparison interesting, the conclusion is up to you.

One last comment is, that if I have convinced you that the salmon copies are well worth collecting, then now is the time. There are many original copies available at reasonable prices, if you shop around and the feel of an original copy of the Magnet has to be experienced to be believed. Don't forget, that even the most recent copy of the Magnet (18th May, 1940) is over forty years old.

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SUPPORTING CAST

by Laurie Sutton

I'm afraid that Maurice Hall's statement that Removites Esmond, Banthorpe, Leigh, Vane and Carlton were introduced by substitute writers is based on assumption rather than fact. All five were genuine Hamilton characters, generally intended to feature in a specific story, but named at intervals in subsequent weeks, probably in response to letters by readers who wrote regarding the stories in which those characters had figured prominently. It was, in any case, the usual policy to mention a new character in passing in the week or two following his introduction, although whether this was done by Hamilton, or was an editorial insertion, is an open question; I suspect the editorial hand.

Banthorpe was a stamp-collector who featured in a story on that theme. He seems to have been mentioned as one of the crowd for some six months. Cyril Vane was a distant - and shady - cousin of Bob Cherry (introduced in 191, and still getting mentioned in 266). Cecil Leigh starred in Magnet 188, and got an occasional mention until at least 248. Carlton (The Slacker) featured in 185, with mentions in the two following weeks. Percy Esmond was a hopeless funk who arrived in 316, running even from Bunter; after instruction from Bob Cherry Esmond eventually licked Bolsover! Esmond was mentioned in 338 and 341.

There are no less than 47 other Remove juniors named by Hamilton during the first seven years of the Magnet, of whom only Lacy was mentioned fairly regularly. Of the other forms, Hamilton mentioned Jones Minimus of the First, 12 unfamiliar names in the 2nd, 11 in the 3rd, 18 in the 4th, 12 in the Shell, 10 in the 5th, and 25 in the 6th. Familiar names used for unfamiliar characters included Gilmore, Todd,

Price, Gadsby, Monson, Tunstall, Banks, Grimes, Kidd.

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LITERARY GENTS & VISUAL GENTS

by Norman Kadish

I think that illustrators to comics and story-papers are often taken too much for granted, or even ignored. Over recent years I have become very interested in the illustrations of "H.S.F." or Foxwell and his marvellous creations of the Bruin Boys and their sisters, the Hippo Girls, as well as the Bunty and Chummy Boys.

A lot of "literary gents" can distinguish the difference in style between true Hamilton stories and those written by substitute authors. I have not looked into this carefully, but I doubt very much whether I could tell the difference.

However, being a "visual gent", I can see the subtle difference between Foxwell's illustrations of the Bruin Boys and those of his "understudies". About 1936, I think, came the changeover. The front covers of the Rainbow were no doubt by a substitute artist; I suspect the strips inside were drawn by Foxwell (although they were not signed), and the stories again were illustrated by the substitute.

Foxwell's illustrations were more "limpid", the poses were often full of movement, even when the Bruin Boys were sitting still at their desks. The line work had a variation in thicknesses; it was more sensitive. In the case of the substitute artist, there is definitely a great "mechanical" feeling; the lines are now practically all of the same thickness, the bodies are more upright, and the faces are all three-quarter front view. There is practically no slight variation in sitting at a desk, for example. I lost a great deal of interest when Foxwell went to another paper.

I wonder if the stories, or the stories to the comic strips, were written by another person, and also wonder if there is any original artwork left of Foxwell's.

I place a copy of a Tiger Tim's Annual by the wardrobe often, so that it is the first thing next morning that greets my eyes when I wake. I know that the colours are put in by the printers (in block, I think), but the brilliant colour-work and the drawing of Foxwell sets me up for the day. It cheers me up tremendously.

REVIEWSMECCANO MAGAZINE 1939(D. M. Bentley  
£15 plus £1.50 p. & p.)

This really is a lovely volume. I find it completely thrilling. It would be almost impossible to over-praise it. Though one has to realise it is a re-print, it feels and looks just exactly like the real thing.

It comprises the 6d. Meccano Magazine for the months of January to June 1939. It is packed with nostalgia for the old days, not the least being that they published for 6d. a copy a book which would be something like 75p if it was in the shops today.

For the reader who was "mechanical-minded" forty-odd years ago, the book is heaven. But even for those like me who had no bent at all for that sort of thing - as a boy I was given a Meccano set for a Christmas present one year and it was wasted on me - the book is a long, long dream of delight. I have spent hours and hours, reading it and browsing over it, and I have not finished it yet.

There are articles on all sorts of hobbies. In fact, on all sorts of subjects. The pictures are just captivating. One of a cinematograph machine, built by the hobbyist, plus an article on it, held me captive for a long time. The train articles and pictures are gorgeous. The Fireside Fun pages of wit and jokes are outstandingly funny. Teacher: "What is a tannery?" Pupil: "A place where they make sixpences."

I've just found an article on "Birds" with pictures. It's great. Tonight I'm going to enjoy "English Windmills" with pictures. It looks marvellous.

It feels and looks just exactly like the real thing. Sorry. I said that before. And it's true. A wonderful, wonderful book for everyone. Buy it for your favourite nephew who is of a mechanical turn of mind. You'll probably end up by keeping it for yourself.

THE CHARLES HAMILTON CALENDAR(Hamilton Museum Press of  
Maidstone)

This unusual calendar is a welcome gem for Christmas time, and it is produced with the high quality which one always associates with Mr. John Wernham and his productions. Slightly misnamed, perhaps, though it has a drawing of Hamilton by Chapman on the cover, it comprises entirely original drawings to each month by the famous Magnet artist, C. H. Chapman. Each month occupies a large full-page, and the dates are as clear as the pictures. A lovely novelty for Christmas and all the following year.

The calendar costs £1.50 which includes post and packing, and it can be obtained from Mrs. Cadogan, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2PY. Supplies are limited.

HURRAH FOR PENGUIN!

by Mary Cadogan

Penguin have recently republished a range of titles that are particularly likely to appeal to readers of COLLECTORS' DIGEST. With these well-produced and economically priced editions, many of us will be able to fill gaps in our collections. (For some reason John

Buchan's MR. STANDFAST has always eluded me, and I m now the happy possessor of the new Penguin version of it, which costs £1.50. And there are several other Buchan's in the Penguin range.) The best value of all is THE PENGUIN COMPLETE SHERLOCK HOLMES at £2.95. This bumper volume of 1122 pages contains all the four novels and fifty-six short stories about the super-sleuth. The publishers point out that this works out at just over a quarter of a penny for each page which, especially in these inflationary days, seems remarkably good value. (There is also a hardback version at £7.95 in the Allen Lane imprint.) Penguin haven't managed yet to produce a complete P. G. Wodehouse, but they have just issued two large and delightful omnibus books about his most popular characters. LIFE WITH JEEVES at £2.95 comprises three Jeeves books (RIGHT HO, JEEVES, THE INIMITABLE JEEVES and VERY GOOD, JEEVES.). LIFE AT BLANDINGS contains three complete novels too - SOMETHING FRESH, SUMMER LIGHTNING and HEAVY WEATHER, and also costs £2.95.

(By the way, Holmes fans may like to know that the first issue in October of WALT DISNEY'S PUZZLE MAGAZINE features a dog detective - complete with deer-stalker - called Shamrock Bones!)

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# News of The Old Boys' Book Clubs

## SOUTH WEST

From the start of our September meeting held at Tim Salisbury's home, a record attendance, which included two well-known members of the London Club, Bill Lofts and Bob Blythe; a welcome return visit of Darrell Swift and three new members, one could sense we were in for an enjoyable afternoon.

Charles Churchill gave a talk on "The History of Nelson Lee Library, 1915 until it joined The Gem in 1933". Grant MacPherson continued with a humorous reading from S.O.L., "St. Frank's Caravanners" and N.L.L. "St. Frank's at the Theatre" - all much appreciated.

Bill Lofts followed with an interesting talk on Billy Bunter in the "Knockout".

After tea, we spent an enjoyable time listening to Bill Lofts talking on D. C. Thomson Boys' Papers, "Wizard", "Hotspur", "Red Circle", etc.

The radio programme, "Good old Greyfriars" was discussed

and Tim has written to the B.B.C. to thank them and with a request that they repeat some of the old T.V. shows.

We ended the meeting at 6.30 p.m., when we went our various ways, looking forward to our next gathering in Spring of 1982.

### MIDLAND

The attendance at our September meeting was thirteen, and we had a thoroughly enjoyable evening. The agenda was too crowded, however, and two items were left out. It was good to see Bob Acraman and his charming wife, Betty.

Our usual features - Anniversary Number and Collectors' Item were on display. The A.N. was a Nelson Lee Library (Old Series) dated 29.9.23, "The Feud at St. Frank's" and the celebrated John Bunterfield Boots is well to the fore. The C.I. (as a tribute to Bob Acraman) was No. 1 of his "Courtfield Newsletter".

The B.B.C. recently put on a Greyfriars programme on Radio. This had been taped by Ivan Webster and I brought along my recorder. The idea was good, but one or two facts had been overlooked. All members present had heard it except two. The recording lasts forty minutes out of the two hours at our meeting, so the idea did not quite come off. We compromised by playing it for twenty minutes.

Excellent refreshments were prepared as usual by Joan Golen and thoroughly enjoyed.

Looking forward to Christmas, we had a letter from our oldest member, Harry Evans, 82 years old and in poor health, had sent a cheque to cover the cost of the Christmas feed. Harry just revels in Old Boys' Book lore and his mind is still sharp despite his poor health.

Another good idea was put forward by Peter Masters that we have a Bring-and-Buy Sale every quarter. The last one showed a profit of £2.50.

The dates of our next two meetings are as follows:- 27th October and 24th November. The date of the Christmas meeting, to which all O.B.B.C. enthusiasts are invited, has yet to be decided.

JACK BELLFIELD - Correspondent.

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CAMBRIDGE

We met at the home of Perran Newman on Sunday, 4th October, 1981. We learned with regret that the absence of President Bill Lofts was due to the death of his brother.

Arrangements for the next meeting were discussed, and, arising from the recent B.B.C. Radio programme on Charles Hamilton, it was agreed to postpone earlier suggested arrangements and to devote the meeting to Hamiltonia.

The subject of the meeting was the works of Arthur Ransome. Keith Hodgkinson gave an introductory talk, and showed a complete set of the "Swallows and Amazons" stories, and also a copy of "Old Peter's Russian Tales". Keith and Bill Thurbon gave an outline of Ransome's career, of his period in Russia from 1913 and during the Russian Revolution, and of his subsequent travels, including his cruising in the Baltic in the boat Ransome had built there, described in "Racundra's first cruise". When Ransome was about 45 years old he settled down in a cottage on Lake Windermere and began to write "Swallows and Amazons", and thus launched the series of tales for which he was so well known. They told how Ransome had begun to write the book when he was interrupted by the visit of an old friend and his children, and how Ransome altered the book to make the six children, to whom the book is dedicated, feel they were the real heroes and heroines of the story. As the grown-up "John" of the story has written, no single incident in the book came from anything but its author's imagination, but occasional small happenings were taken from life, as was the setting of the story. The "John" of the stories was in fact a girl, and was at one time in the 1930's a pupil at the Perse Girls' School in Cambridge. Ransome's remark was quoted. "You write not for children, but for yourself, and if by good fortune children enjoy your books, why then, you are a writer of children's books".

Keith showed the film of "Swallows and Amazons", and scenes he had shot of the setting used by Ransome for his Broadland stories "The Coot Club" and "The Big Six". He also showed some scenes he had shot of the Club's 10th birthday party, and of a visit to Neville Woods's home at Sweffling.

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Members enjoyed Mrs. Newman's delicious tea. Mike Rouse showed some of his latest acquisitions, including a book of Bairnsfather's first War cartoons.

The meeting closed with a warm vote of thanks to Perran and Mrs. Newman for their hospitality.

### LONDON

The Beckenham meeting was an unqualified success and with an excellent attendance. John Wernham, the President of the club, brought along supplies of the Charles Hamilton Calendar for 1982. Each month shows a drawing by Chapman of the changing scenes of the year. Messrs. Sutton and Doyle proposed and seconded the hearty vote of thanks to John Wernham for such a splendid calendar.

"Coker's Immersion Heater" was the title of a pastiche written jointly by Rev. Arthur and Miriam Bruning, the latter reading several humorous chapters from it.

From diverse Magnet series, Roy Parsons read a sentence with the character named X and those participating in the competition had to state who X was. Roger Jenkins was the winner and Laurie Sutton was the second best. Roy awarded suitable prizes.

Millicent Lyle, always good for a treatise, gave one entitled "Heads and Tails, About Them". This was a very good talk on the famous and infamous headmasters and headmistresses of which ranged from Doctor Arnold of Rugby to Doctor Birchmall of Saint Sam's. Bob Blythe's reading from Memory Lane was from the newsletter of October 1964 which dealt mainly about the club's outing in September of that year to Margate and Roselawn, Kingsgate. Bob read some more of the E.S.B. Correspondence.

John Wernham proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Alex, Mary and Teresa Cadogan for their hospitality.

Next meeting at the Walthamstown venue on Sunday, 8th November. Tea provided, but bring own tuck. BEN WHITER

### NORTHERN

We had ten Members present for our meeting on Saturday evening, 10th October. Our Secretary, Geoffrey Good, was not able to

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be with us, owing to weekend Anniversary Celebrations at his church.

Harry Barlow, our official club "binder" had been given a batch of very early "Boys' Friend Library" to bind-up, containing the very first Rookwood stories.

For our main part of the programme, a warm welcome was given to Michael Bentley on his first visit to our Club. Over the years, Michael has been involved in the retail trade and has sold the Howard Baker reprints. As a new venture, he had brought along some pre-publication copies of Meccano Magazine facsimiles. These are splendid reproductions and members were most impressed. He also brought a box of varied old boys' literature, which was quickly snapped up in a prompt sale.

Michael gave us an interesting talk on his involvement with our hobby: a film slide showing of some of the items he read as a boy - from Sunny Stories to Rupert, Enid Blyton stories, to William, Biggles and Hamiltonia. Michael had brought along so much material, that it was impossible to cram everything into the time we had available, so we hope to see him again in the near future.

Mollie passed round a newspaper cutting from that day's paper, concerning the anniversary of the birth of P. G. Wodehouse. This was of particular interest to us, for he was at one time, our President.

#### JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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## The Postman Called

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

Rev. JACK HUGHES (Queensland): Just 49 years ago my Dad and I selected the Gem as my weekly paper as I graduated from "Crackers" and "My Favourite". I can remember that newsagent's shop in Hobart, and the elderly lady owner who passed over various papers for me to look at, just as it had happened a few days ago. And to think, I am still talking and reading Gems and Magnets after all the years.

STAN KNIGHT (Cheltenham): 35 years of the C.D. and the Annual. What a record! I don't suppose either Herbert or yourself visualised such a span of life for our beloved monthly and Annual. Life wouldn't

be the same without them!

JACK BERRY (Southport): I loved your comments on the Test Cricket. Probably some time in the future, as we sit in a club or a pub discussing sport, someone is bound to say: "Did you watch the telly when Botham made that great century in the Fifth Test against the Aussies at Old Trafford?" I shall reply proudly: "I was there, old son, I WAS THERE!"

JACK COOK (Newcastle-on-Tyne): News has reached me of the passing of my old friend, Miss Elizabeth Woan. She and I met at the N/C Writers Circle many years ago. Unlike her famous uncle, whom she resembled greatly, she did not write fiction, but penned articles for the Woman's Press. Who was the famous uncle? None other than Edgar Wallace.

D. B. STARK (Plumpton Green): I was very interested in your editorial on the use of slang. I have not studied the "progress" of slang, though it could be a fascinating subject, but I did notice that towards the end of the fifties such slang as there was, was getting more standardised and less interesting. Subsequently I moved to another career and observed the same trend.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: One slang ejaculation in the later days of Hamilton, and, I imagine, peculiar to Hamiltonia, was "Great pip!" - and it always gave me the itch.)

LEN WORMULL (Romford): Recommended reading from the public library: James Hilton's "Murder At School", a mystery-thriller written before his more famous Goodbye, Mr. Chips. A gripping story from start to finish, it concerns the alleged murders of two schoolboy brothers and a master. An Old Boy of Oakington School, with a flair for solving mysteries, is called in by the Headmaster to help in the matter. Red herrings abound, as is customary, and the climax is as thrilling as any I have read. It turns out that only one schoolboy is actually murdered.

I cannot recall any parallels in the school stories of Hamilton and Brooks - only attempted murders of schoolboys, and assaults on masters. Pentelow, we know, technically murdered Arthur Courtney, though not quite the same thing. The nearest Brooks came to it was with Walter Church, by poison dart on the playing fields. I suppose actual murder would have been too blood-thirsty for the ruling body at Amalgamated Press. It would have refuted their claim of 'Clean,

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Wholesome Literature'.

Fr. F. HERTZBERG (Wirral): J.E.M. asks whether 'old Thomsonians go back to tales of Morgyn the Mighty'. I certainly do, although it is usually Braddock, either in my bound Rovers, or the hard-backed books. Morgyn is still with us, incidentally, a 64-page large format adventure will appear in the next Red Dagger Library, although in pictures.

Mr. Vincent sees no use for Bunter Mi. Quite apart from being (comparatively) nice in himself, Sammy had the dual advantages of provoking the authorial comments about the lack of filial affection in the Bunter 'tribe', and of being half-way between (Billy) Bunter and humanity!

BILL LOFTS (London): I was interested to read about Charles Shadwell the famous orchestra leader on the B.B.C. Comedians loved to joke about his bald pate. He was still alive last I heard, and I met him in Cambridge only a few years ago, when long retired he ran a Public House. He kindly autographed a free gift booklet I had from The War Thriller dealing with The Garrison Theatre, and I found him a most charming man with beautiful long fingers that hallmark a very clever musician. Later he retired completely and went to live in the West Country I believe.

#### A LOOK BACK TO SEPTEMBER

- (AND TOM TARTAR)

from Nic Gayle

How good this month's C.D. was! A real scorcher. Every article had some point of interest or controversy. How I wish next month's could be a double number! Worth a fiver, I'll be bound. Ah well . . .

I am prompted to answer five points raised in this month's issue; if you deem them of general interest, perhaps you would be good enough to publish them?

1. Your editorial comments re: serials certainly found an echo in my heart. Some of them in the Nelson Lee Library were truly awful. Lord, but there was one called 'Tom Tartar at School' that had to be read to be believed. Such twaddle makes one realize just how good Brooks and Hamilton really were.

2. Esmond Kadish's comment that Vivian Travers is somewhat akin to

the Caterpillar of Highcliffe is, I feel, slightly off the mark. There is a very Edwardian air about the Caterpillar's languid whimsicality that touches none of Brooks's characters. A better comparison, in my opinion, would be with Cardew.

3. J. P. Fitzgerald's comments about the deterioration of the English language were interestin' - yaas, they really were. Bai jove, the deah boy made wathah a good point there.

4. I must say that I couldn't help arching an eyebrow at Mr. Lofts's sentence re: Lee enthusiasts claiming everything must have been written about that paper now: I find it difficult to imagine anybody making such a preposterous claim. If there is, perhaps that person would be good enough to drop me a line? ...

5. For what it is worth, I entirely agree that Kenneth Brookes was the artist in the 'House of Fear'.

I long for the Annual - there's nothing like it!

EDITORIAL COMMENT: I find Mr. Gayle's reference to a Nelson Lee Library serial "Tom Tartar at School" very interesting. In 1907 a serial, "Tom Tartar at School" appeared in one of the Hamilton Edwards papers - either the Boys' Realm or the Boys' Herald. No author's name was given, but there was at least one sequel serial to it. In 1909 a serial "Lucy Gray's Schooldays" appeared in the Girls' Reader, described as "a real old-fashioned school story by the author of 'Tom Tartar's Schooldays'". Just what was meant, so early in the century, by "an old-fashioned school story" it is hard to decide. I have the feeling that "Tom Tartar's Schooldays" was itself reprinted in the Girls' Reader or one of its sister papers, though I have not the time necessary to browse over my large number of volumes. All of these "Tom Tartar" and "Lucy Gray" serials were illustrated by a rather heavy-handed artist named Vincent Daniel. He used very thick linework in his drawings, which made all his characters seem to be black-haired. His work was not very attractive. It would be interesting to discover whether this Tom Tartar story, referred to by Mr. Gayle, was the old one from before the first world war, as seems likely. It would appear to be an odd choice to run in the Nelson Lee all those years later.)

## TWILIGHT ECHO

by Jack Adrian

My old friend Frank Pepper (Hal Wilton) would be exceedingly miffed to discover that his famous character Rockfist Rogan had been transplanted into D. C. Thomson territory ("Twilight At Amalgamated", September issue). But J.E.M. may be forgiven the memory-lapse because Rockfist appeared in the Champion, a paper which sometimes

out-Thomsoned Thomsons, and was certainly the AP's most successful boys' adventure paper (bar none) of the inter-War years -- with Rockfist himself as one of its most popular characters.

Amusingly, the series (which ran in one form or another for over twenty years) was very nearly strangled at birth by the editor, Reg Eves, who, when Frank sent him a synopsis, pooh-pooed the whole idea of a series written around a First War fighter-pilot-cum-boxer (this was in the late-'30s, when the First War was considered to be a dead duck). Frank persevered and Eves grudgingly commissioned six stories, and then (prompted by the enthusiasm of one of the subs, Bernard Smith) another six, although pointing out that that had to be all because no-one was going to be reading this stuff anyway. Almost as soon as he'd said this he had to frantically get in touch with Frank demanding 'as many as you can write!' The first few stories had just been published and the Champion offices were suddenly knee-deep in rapturous letters.

#### P.C. 49

(In our September editorial, we referred to P.C. 49, and asked whether that name rang a bell in anybody's memory. Dozens and dozens of letters have come in to the editorial office on the subject, and I thank most gratefully all those who took the trouble to write. We have selected two letters which seem to be representative of the subject, and here they are. I still have a feeling that, when I was small, they used to sing a song about P.C. 49 at the music halls and concert-parties. - Ed.)

BRIAN DOYLE writes: In the September C.D. you ask, in your Editorial, 'Does P.C. 49 ring a bell in anyone else's head?'

Yes, indeed he does. I devoted a paragraph or two about him in a lengthy feature I wrote for the C.D. Annual a few years ago about old BBC radio heroes. He was Police Constable Archibald Berkeley-Willoughby - better-known to BBC radio listeners of the 40's and 50's as P.C. 49 of the London Metropolitan Police. 'The Adventures of P.C. 49' was first broadcast in 1947 and ran in regular series until the early-1950's, being written by Alan Stranks. 'Fortynine' himself was portrayed by Brian Reece and his girl-friend (later wife) Joan Carr was played by Joy Shelton. Each episode of thirty minutes was self-contained and comprised an entertaining mixture of comedy, romance and excitement. Two 'P.C. 49 Annuals' were published around 1949-50 and there were also two films: 'The Adventures of P.C. 49' in 1950 (with Hugh Latimer)

and "A Case for P.C. 49" in 1951 (with Brian Reece and Joy Shelton in their original roles).

Fairly full details about the school story writers mentioned by Leyland Vincent in his letter in the same C.D. (Harold Avery, Andrew Home, etc.) can be found in my 1964 publication "The Who's Who of Boys' Writers and Illustrators", currently obtainable from Norman Shaw.

SIMON GARRETT writes: P.C. 49 mentioned in your September editorial, was a popular character in the Eagle comic.

His adventures appeared in black-and-white strip cartoon form from 1950 to 1957.

He was originally the hero of a radio series, played then by Brian Reece, but I'm not sure when this was broadcast; presumably it was running in 1950 because Eagle introduced the strip as "From the famous radio series by Alan Stranks".

"49" was a rather bumbling character, but showed ample courage and initiative in a crisis. He was what would now be called a Community Officer, plodding his London beat and doing his stuff at a local boys' club. It was said that he made Sergeant Dixon look like Starsky and Hutch.

But that's the voice of a disillusioned era.

To anyone of my generation, "49", though not one of the most famous Eagle characters, represented an engaging and reassuring image of traditional policing.

It's good to be reminded of him.

#### WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG

by Len Hawkey

In the excellent September issue I was especially interested to learn of Mr. Goodman's progression from "Fairytale" to School and Adventure stories, as it was not dissimilar to my own. I don't recall "Mabel" - indeed my earliest recollection is "Peter & Daffy and the Little Brown Man" in "Wonderland Weekly", around 1920. But I do recall the "King Pippin" stories from about that date - there were three or four of this small "Library" published by Henderson's every month - "Young Folk's Tales", and I believe they ran from about 1906 to 1921 or so. Other characters in these stories were Dick Daring, his sweetheart Daisy, also Princess Pansy and the villainous King Bono.

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The writer was normally given as "Roland Quiz" but this was a pseudonym originally for Richard M. H. Quittenton, who seemingly created Tim Pippin (as he first was) around 1874. The initial illustrator was John Proctor, under the name of "Puck". I don't know how it came about that Henderson's took the characters over, but I have quite a few of the earliest issues, circa 1907, and the main artist was then J. Ayton Symington, a prolific illustrator of juvenile fiction in the 1900's. A little later, many issues were illustrated by G. W. Wakefield, famous some years after as the definitive illustrator of "Rookwood", and of course for his work in "Film Fun" and other comics.

In 1936, a firm, Joiner and Steele, published most of the original 1870's stories, with the illustrations, in book form, called "Giantland - or the Wonderful Adventures of Tim Pippin". I wonder if these characters evoke memories amongst other members, who, like Mr. Goodman and myself, "moved on" to the "Jester" and similar comics, thence to "Nelson Lee", the Companion Papers, and of course, the "Union Jack". This progression proved a gateway to Edgar Wallace, Oppenheim, Austin Freeman, and then a much wider world of adult reading. "From little acorns ... etc."

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