

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS DIGEST

VOLUME 36

NUMBER 424

APRIL 1982

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THE EDITOR TALKS

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THE GEM AND THE NELSON LEE

In our Nelson Lee Column this month, our contributor, Mr. Grant-McPherson, looks back at the time, some 49 years ago, when the Nelson Lee Library was amalgamated with the Gem. Probably, all these years later, most of us would not wish that things had been any different from what they were. After all, an event like that is part and parcel of the history of the old papers which we love so much, and whose memories we work to keep alive.

But how did Nelson Lee readers feel about it at the time? And how did Gem readers regard the amalgamation?

What brought about the demise of the Nelson Lee? I have gathered, from what our Lee experts have written since, that there had

been a little deterioration in the appeal of the St. Frank's stories. Did Brooks lose his touch just a trifle in the declining years of the Lee? Was Handforth overplayed? Was there too much crime and detective work mingled with the much-loved school characters? I cannot answer those questions myself. My knowledge of St. Frank's is quite insufficient. But, as Danny's entries in his Diary show, by 1932 the Nelson Lee Library did not seem to be what it had been in its heyday. The month or two during which very old Maxwell Scott serials from the Boys' Friend of early in the century were carved up into complete stories and served up to Lee readers must have been a pointer to something. To what? Was the regular supply from Brooks no longer available, for any reason? Or was the enthusiasm for school-cum-detective stories waning?

Lee readers, who had remained loyal in their tens of thousands, must have been deeply disappointed. I wonder just how many of them transferred their loyalty to the Gem?

And were Gem readers pleased or otherwise? I recall that I myself was disgruntled. I felt, no doubt, just like the Princess Snowee would feel if we introduced a grey Persian into the household to share her Whiskas and to halve the attention given to stroking her fur or rubbing her ears.

Like most Gem readers, I bought the Gem for St. Jim's. I felt that the introduction of another paper's characters into the Gem would shorten the amount of space devoted to St. Jim's. And, if St. Frank's proved popular in the Gem, there was no telling what might happen. The original St. Jim's tales being reprinted at that time were very long. Things did not look too promising for them.

I doubt whether it was a particularly good amalgamation. I would have thought that amalgamation with the Ranger, which was less definite in its offerings than the Gem, would have been better. But my view of it all was purely selfish in those days. I would not change what happened, now.

If you were around and buying the Gem and the Lee 49 years ago, what did you feel about the marriage? Were you sad, were you happy, were you annoyed - or what? Drop us a few lines and tell us.

"NEW FEATURE NEXT MONTH"

"Danny is a schoolboy of exactly fifty years ago. There is nothing sentimental about Danny, but we think the entries in his Diary may touch your heart-strings. We hope you are going to like Danny. Fascinating New Feature - Starts Next Month!"

That announcement appeared in Collectors' Digest exactly twenty years ago, in April 1962 to be precise. Readers DID like Danny. He caught on at once, and he has never lost his grip down the tumbling corridors of Time. He set the old stories and the old papers we loved against the social history of the days in which they first appeared, and C.D. readers loved him. They loved his family - his Mum and his Dad, his brother Doug, and his brother's succession of girl friends. They loved his Auntie Gwen and his Gran who lived in Layer Marney, though it is a long time since we have heard of those two.

And next month it will be exactly twenty years since we started, by kind permission of that gentleman himself, to publish extracts from Danny's Diary. And he has never mixxed a month since. It is rather pleasing. But, in a way, it is rather alarming - when one realises that twenty years have just slipped by since that first extract appeared. The years don't fly. They're gone in a flash.

Next month, in addition to the normal extracts from his Diary of fifty years ago, we shall also publish a few extracts from his very first Diary - and those extracts came from the year 1912. Just to mark the occasion.

DOROTHY EDEN

I was sad to learn recently of the death of the novelist, Dorothy Eden. I have all her books, except a few very early ones, in my library. She told me once that, among her fans, she had very few men readers. I replied that men did not know what they were missing.

Miss Eden was a New Zealander, who came to live in London in 1949. In the last dozen years or so she has concentrated on straight romantic novels, which I thought rather a pity. She had a remarkable flair for portraying the "eerie", and there was a quality of eeriness and excitement in the work of her middle years. Tales like "Lamb to the

Slaughter", "Listen to Danger", "Cat's Prey", "Death is a Red Rose", and others, will live on for me long after her later work is forgotten.

Like Charles Hamilton and Agatha Christie, she had the literary peculiarity of repeating the names for different characters, which seems odd with all the millions of names floating around. But it is a minor detail. To me, she seemed to waste her talent in later years. But that, of course, is only the mere man talking - and she didn't really write for men.

THOSE MEMORY TEASERS

Last month our contributor, Len Wormull, remembered the different places where he read the old stories. I recall buying a Magnet and reading it in a train puffing along on the branch line which used to run (it may still do so) from Grays to Romford in Essex. The story was in the middle of the First Rebel Series. I subsequently wrote off to the A.P. for the earlier stories in the series, and I placed a regular order with my newsagent for the Magnet. All the bound volumes of Magnets in my library from that time onwards contain the copies which were delivered to me week after week, up till the end.

Mr. Spiers of Basingstoke rang me up to say he has a copy of "The Exquisite Burden", the book to which I referred last month. Mr. Spiers bought his copy for 6d. in a church bazaar. And we also mused over church bazaars in this column not long ago.

THE EDITOR

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Danny's Diary

APRIL 1932

Ken King - King of the Islands - is back in Modern Boy with a new series which started in the second week of April. The opening story is "South Seas Shipmates". Ken, with his crew, sets off in the "Dawn" on a new adventure in the Tropic Seas. This time the "Dawn" has a strange and sinister passenger in Bristow Holt of Kolo, a big name in the Pacific.

The second tale is "Roaring Demons". Ken is a fine seaman, but this trip he has two demons to reckon with - a hurricane is one, and Bristow Holt is the other. And the young skipper finds himself bound, helpless, to his own mast. Next "Treasure of Toto". There is a box of treasure to dig up on a cannibal island, and there is a canoe which vanished.

Finally, "The Bully of the Octopus". The Octopus is a brig. The skipper of the 'Octopus' is hard up for a crew, and kidnaps some of Ken King's men. The series continues.

The stories about Captain Justice and those about Grey Shadow continue in Modern Boy, and there is a new series about the Flying tramps - a kind of taxi service of the air - by John Allan.

In the Boys' Friend Library this month, No. 331 is "King of the Islands" which contains the very first stories about Ken King from the earlier Modern Boy.

The Cup Final at Wembley has been won this year by Newcastle United who beat Arsenal 2 - 1. This is the third time that Newcastle has won the crown. The King and Queen, Princess Mary, and Lord Harewood, her husband, were at the Final.

First of the month in the Nelson Lee Library is "The Final Round", which concludes the present series with Nelson Lee as a detective, presumably before he became a schoolmaster. With the following week we were back at St. Frank's (for a time, at any rate) in a new series which starts off with "The Green Triangle's Decree". Professor Zingrave, having escaped from prison, is on a campaign of

vengeance, and, in disguise, he comes back as the Head of St. Frank's - which really takes a bit of swallowing. There is plenty of excitement.

An excellent pair of stories in the Schoolboys' Own Library this month. "The Call of the Ring" is the concluding part of the story about Dury, the ex-professional boxer, who came to Greyfriars as a schoolboy. This is No. 169. The second tale, No. 170, is "Prefects on Strike" in which the Head comes on Bulkeley giving Raby a whacking, so Bulkeley loses the captaincy. And all the prefects strike on his behalf. The Head tries his hand with Fifth Form prefects, till Bulkeley redeems his good name in a school fire. Lovely tales.

The new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon has been opened by the Prince of Wales.

Another gorgeous month in the grand Magnet. The series about the Bounder as Captain of the Remove continues. In "The Swot of the Remove", Wharton's misunderstanding with his uncle is cleared up happily, but the Bounder is still captain. Next a grand tale "The Bounder's Folly", set in the Easter holidays. At Wimford, near Wharton Lodge, the Bounder makes friends with a man named Paget, who is really a bank robber. Then, "Harry Wharton's Enemy", still on holiday, with the Bounder, now leagued with Ponsonby, carrying on his feud with Harry Wharton. Next week, back at school, brings "The Fool of the School" in which Coker wants to put money on a horse. It sounds bad to the Head and Mr. Prout, but the horse is one to replace the horse of Mr. Joyce, the woodcutter. A glorious romp. Finally "The Vanished Sovereigns". Gosling has lost the sovereigns - and, with fool's luck once more, it is Coker who finds out what happened to them.

At the pictures this month we have seen Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell in "Merely Mary Ann"; very enjoyable. In this programme was a new Laurel & Hardy two-reeler "Chickens Come Home".

Herbert Marshall and Edna Best (husband and wife in real life) were in a jolly comedy "Michael and Mary"; a truly lovely film was Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper in "The Champ". It even made tough old me shed a tear. Greta Garbo and Clark Gable were in "The Rise of Helga" - one of those that Mum liked but I found hard-going.

I love all the James Cagney pictures. He is with Loretta Young in "Taxi", an exciting tale about rival taxi firms, with crooked deals

thrown in. Finally came Renate Muller, Jack Hulbert, and Owen Nares in "Sunshine Susie", a nice little musical. In this programme was another new Laurel & Hardy two-reeler "Our Wife".

The trams have ended their life in Barrow-in-Furness, and have been replaced with buses.

Tip-top month in the mighty Gem. April opened with "The Vengeance of Nobbler Jim". Tom Merry is chosen to run as a hare for the Sixth Form Harriers, but he runs into danger from Nobbler Jim, who has come back for revenge on the fellow who helped to arrest him. An extra-long tale. Next, another long one, "Sportsmen of St. Jim's", a yarn of rivalry with the Grammar School. Then "Gussy Goes Goofy" (beastly title for a fine tale) in which Gussy falls in love again - with another Ethel. Then "Invaders of St. Jim's", another one introducing the Grammarians. Final of the month "Mellish - the Mischief-Maker", a lovely one on more serious lines, with Mellish sneakily making trouble all over the place. All the stories in the Gem this month have been extra-long. The dud Rookwood yarns have ended, and we get a lot more of St. Jim's. I hope it goes on this way.

A new book by the novelist Agatha Christie has just been published. It is entitled "Peril at End House", and it cost Doug 3/6, but he says it is worth it. He let me read it, and I revelled in it. I was amazed when I found out the identity of the murderer. I must try to read some more of Aggie's books.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: The Gem tale "The Vengeance of Nobbler Jim" was a reprint of the third of the enlarged penny Gems, and originally had the quaint title "King of the Castle". Ferrers Locke is featured again in this one, and one wonders whether the author may have considered a detective series of Ferrers Locke with Tom as his "boy assistant". "Sportsmen of St. Jim's" was "St. Jim's to the Rescue" in 1908; "Gussy Goes Goofy" had once been "D'Arcy the Dude"; "Invaders of St. Jim's" was originally entitled "The Invaders", and "Mellish, the Mischief-Maker" was previously "The Tell-Tale", published in the early Penny Popular with the intriguing title "Rough Justice".

In this group, one story was completely omitted from the reprints for no obvious reason. This was "Skimpole, Detective". Possibly omitted because it was unusually long, even for early penny blue cover days. It was yet another tale introducing Ferrers Locke, and it may have been held over for this reason, and then forgotten.

S. O. L. No. 169, "The Call of the Ring" comprised the final three stories of the six-story Magnet series of early 1927, concerning the Game Kid. "Prefects on Strike" comprised

seven Rookwood stories from early 1919 in the Boys' Friend,

The M.G.M. film "The Champ" was the first talking picture to be screened in the Small Cinema, concerning which we recently completed a long series of short articles.)

* * * * *

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

Many thanks to the kind people who have supplied me with material for Blakiana. I have enough for a couple of months so will soon be wanting more. I hope you will enjoy this month's contributions; the article by William Lister will be continued next month. In the meantime I wish everyone a Happy Easter.

A SEXTON BLAKE NUGGET

by John Bridgwater

As far as I can remember I have never come across any mention of Sexton Blake appearing in the 3d. Nugget Library. Nelson Lee made many appearances along with other less known detectives such as Peter Flint, Martin Fetter and Gripton Court. Consequently it came as a surprise to find the Guv'nor playing a supporting role in the form of a short story at the back of No. 24 in which the main feature is "The Panic Plunderers" (there's a title to stimulate the imagination) starring Gripton Court and Joe Sparks, his office boy and assistant. The Blake story is called "The Green Emerald". The story is unusual in that Blake takes on a job he does not want. He tries hard to put off his insistent client but finally agrees to safeguard the wedding presents of Sir Christopher Trevelyans daughter Flora, on her wedding day. Sir Christopher had been an adviser to three Shahs of Persia and an organiser of communications and finance in that country; a man used to getting his own way, which he does in this matter, paying Blake the excessively high fee of 200 guineas for the nominally simple task. The presents turn out to be a very valuable collection of jewels, china and enamels, etc. The "pick of the bunch" as the author puts it, is the Emerald Star, an emerald cut into the shape of a seven-pointed star. A gem of incalculable value. It was given to Sir Christopher by the late Shah some years before and being deemed too valuable for him to keep

personally in Persia it had been despatched to his bank with a deed of gift to Flora directing that the star be placed in her hands on her wedding day by the bank and handed to no-one else. On returning for the wedding Sir Christopher had asked the bank to give him the star so that he could present it to his daughter personally on the great day, but the terms of the deed made it impossible for the bank to accede to his request.

On the wedding day Blake duly supervises the display of the presents and the star is handed over to Flora and put on display with the other presents. Unfortunately Sir Christopher is laid up in bed with an attack of malaria but he had asked Flora to take any special present up to show him, consequently she wants to take up the Star but Blake refuses to allow this. Blake had thought at first that this was one of the easiest fees he had ever earned, however, it turns out to be a very arduous business requiring extreme vigilance when the guests arrive and want to handle the various presents. He is also pestered by all sorts of distractions such as telegrams requiring immediate replies and visitors wanting to see him on urgent business. In the midst of it all Sir Christopher recovers and offers to relieve him so that he can deal with his pressing matters. Blake declines but the baronet keeps dodging in and out on various pretexts, handling the Star to show it off to the guests and taxing Blake's vigilance to the utmost. At last the happy couple depart and the bank official arrives to take over the presents for safe keeping. Sir Christopher hands the official a letter from Flora authorising the handing over of the Star to himself. This is done and Sir Christopher bids Blake goodbye shaking his hand. To the surprise of all Blake handcuffs him and hands him over to two policemen he had standing by. It turns out that "Sir Christopher" is really a very daring rogue out to steal the Star and relying on the fact that Flora had not seen her father for many years. The real Sir Christopher was still in Persia in semi-disgrace and a virtual prisoner, the present Shah's favour being a very fickle thing. But the Baronet had experienced "downs" before as well as "ups". Blake explains that the rogue had been too clever. He made the mistake of giving Blake a post-dated cheque, being too anxious to pay when he should have left paying till

afterwards. This roused Blake's suspicions and he made enquiries concerning the baronet in Persia so discovering the truth. He delayed the arrest so as not to spoil Flora's wedding.

Is this a hither-to unknown Blake story? Are there any more Blake stories in the Nugget Library? There seems to be no end to the bye-ways of Blakiana.

WHO SAID TOM MIX IS DEAD?

by William Lister

So far as I am concerned there are three types of writers. There are those who have a lucky strike, they produce a best-seller, then maybe a mediocre second book, after that they fade from the scene. Next the literary genius that produces classic by classic at reasonable intervals and become household names. The third, and the type that we of the O.B.B.C. have most in common is the plodder. Day after day, week after week, they plod along, creating new plots, new characters, to delight their readers. With pen and typewriter, blood, sweat and tears, they lay the result in the hands of the editor and publishers and await your opinion. Of such were Charles Hamilton, Edwy Searles Brooks, along with just a few Sexton Blake writers. There are only a few of the like today, though if you care to look you will find one here and there.

Take J. T. Edson the cowboy writer of Corgi paperback fame, to say nothing of other publishers in hardback. A cowboy fan himself he has stuck at it through thick and thin and still rattles the keys of the typewriter day by day. At the time of writing I see his 109th book is due to appear. All cowboys and seething with characters of his own creation mingled with a few real life Western heroes. Truly a plodder among plodders. I mention this because I studiously avoided cowboy stories till late in life I was suddenly bitten by J. T. Edson bug and now have around 86 copies of his work.

It occurred to me in one of my brighter moments that, no doubt, the renowned Sexton Blake and the equally renowned Tinker, could have appeared in a few Western productions themselves. An inquiry to Josie Packman assured me that this was so and before long there arrived in my post the four following Union Jacks: "The Law of the Gun", No. 1298, dated 1 September, 1928; "The Scourge of No-man's Land",

No. 1304, dated 13 October, 1928; "The Gold Gang", No. 1316, dated 4 January, 1929; "The Flaming Trail", No. 1329, dated 6 April, 1929. Being no different from most people I turn my attention to illustrations, giving as they do an overall picture of the tales. Pictures of a train hold-up by masked cowboys, posters of "Wanted" men with the promise of a hanging, scenes of a saloon brawl, to say nothing of Red Indians; who said "Tom Mix is dead?"

"The Law of the Gun" will transport you to the New Mexico of the twenties, and the only law they jump to is the law of the gun. They were tough and hadn't much opinion of Britishers, but they had yet to meet Sexton Blake. Take a look at the characters! Two of them are ready made, I refer to Sexton Blake and Tinker who star throughout the series of four, the others are products of the author's imagination.

I hope you have heard of Bat Crone, with a name like that he is bound to be a bad lad -- he is. The biggest kind of tough ever built, eats a child before breakfast, kills three men with one bullet. Holds up a Sheriff's posse with the toe of his boot. If you happen to run into him he will strip you as an Apache strips a jack rabbit. Thus the author of the Law of the Gun brings an irresistible force against an immovable object, when he brings Bat Crone against Sexton Blake. Bat sends a note to our Sexton Blake - very nasty too. To Sexton Blake, You are not wanted in this State, nor yet aboard these cars. When they stop at Lexisville ten miles from Arizona, drop off, you and your kid, and make over the border. If you stay in New Mexico you will be dead meat. Bat Crone.

It took a few encounters and a bare fist boxing match for Blake to sort out poor old Bat Crone. It speaks well of Sexton Blake that they finish the best of friends.

It's not my purpose to deal with the overall theme of the tales but to take a peek at the characters, so we press on to the "Scourge of No-man's Land". We leave New Mexico for No-man's land, a rich field at Bear Creek in Northern Idaho. According to the editor 'A place of easy riches, crime and sudden death', a place that needs the presence of Sexton Blake.

In 1928 it was the loneliest place in the United States.

(To be continued)

NELSON LEE COLUMN

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"THE GEM"

NEXT WEEK!

I wonder how many boys joined me on the 12th August, 1933, in thinking: "What has happened to my favourite weekly?"

No doubt somebody somewhere had a good reason, but the following lines show how it appeared to at least one of its readers.

THE END OF THE NELSON LEE

by E. Grant-McPherson

5th August, 1933. Third New Series No. 24. The penultimate issue. The only intimation of anything amiss, was a mention in the

Round Table Talk to the effect that the next issue would contain an Important Announcement that would concern everyone.

12th August, 1933. No. 25. The final issue of the Nelson Lee. Several pages carry small items announcing such statements as: "Don't ask for the Nelson Lee next week; ask for the Gem for this is the last issue. The Nelson Lee will in future be incorporated in the Gem" - these culminating in a full-page advert.

The Round Table Talk tells us that the Gem must be asked for next week and that the exploits of the St. Frank's chums will be continued in the Gem. The short story at the back was about St. Jim's.

12th August, 1933. Gem No. 1330. There is a footnote at the end of the serial to the effect that the new serial would feature Nelson Lee and Nipper and Co. of St. Frank's.

19th August, 1933. Gem No. 1331. At the top of the page above the normal title The Gem, in letters $\frac{3}{8}$ " high is the caption THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY AND -. Underneath the 'The Gem' the wording: Incorporating the Nelson Lee Library. This latter was retained until the end of the year, Gem No. 1350, when it was dropped. On page 3 was a box stating: This Grand Number of the Gem incorporates The Nelson Lee Library, former readers of which are accorded a hearty welcome, the Editor. On page 17 in the Editor's Notebook there is a big write-up.

The last story in the Lee was about Dr. Foo Chow, itself a reprint from the First New Series. The balance of these stories was continued as the serial at the back of the Gem.

Following the Foo Chow serial came a new story, The White Giants of El Dorado. A number of St. Frank's pupils with Nelson Lee, Dorrie, and, of course, Umlosi, travelling in an Airship, The Sky Wanderer, revisit the Dream City first met in summer 1920. The city is now ruled by none other than Lee's old adversary, Professor Zingrave, and many are the adventures our heroes have before they finally outwit him. Gem No. 1346 depicted an incident from the St. Frank's story on its cover; this was the only occasion that this happened.

After the White Giants came Treasure Isle, a completely new story. The company as before, again with an airship, go in search of an explorer whose ship's crew has mutinied whilst he was searching for

buried treasure on Tao Tao island.

After many exciting adventures our chums manage to foil the mutineers and find the treasure for the explorer.

The next story takes place way out west in Arizona. Justin B. Farman learns that there is trouble at the ranch he has inherited. He takes six juniors with him to Ghost River Ranch. When some of them get captured by the Black Riders, he sends for Nelson Lee, who, in company with Justin's father, Big Jim Farman, outwits the rustlers and finally clears up the matter.

The sixth story entitled "The School from Down Under", deals with the adventures of the St. Frank's boys with a party of Australian school boys and their masters who take over the River House School for a period. Throw in a mystery and a lot of rivalry, and you have the ingredients for a new Brooks story.

"The Ten Talons of Taaz" is a ten-part story in which ten of the St. Frank's juniors assist in the rescue of a number of Tibetans from a shipwreck, but in doing so they upset a religious sect by looking at the face of their God, and each of the ten parts deals with the trials of one of the boys to prove his fitness to live.

Following this came another reprint very slightly abridged, but not enough to affect the story. This was the first Northestria series, in my opinion one of the best things that Edwy ever wrote, now entitled "The Secret World".

This in turn was followed by yet another reprint, just one book this time, "The Mystery of the Poisoned River", now called "Mystery Mill".

The last of the serials is "The Black Hand at St. Frank's". Another completely new story. Eight of the St. Frank's boys rescue an airman from a crashed plane; when they realise that he is dying they promise to deliver a package for him to a Dr. Zangari, an astronomer, and to keep it secret. They little imagine, however, what they are letting themselves in for. The doctor turns out to be a mafia leader, and when some of the boys are captured, Nelson Lee and Scotland Yard come to the rescue and of course all ends happily.

This serial ends in Gem No. 1448. There is no further mention

of St. Frank's.

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA LEE

* * * * *

DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 176 - Gems Nos. 27-32 - Condor Series

The first long series in the Gem was something of a surprising innovation - a summer cruise for those boys whose parents approved, with lessons taking place on board all through the holidays. Dr. Holmes was not going himself, and he left his two housemasters in charge. Mr. Ratcliff claimed the right, as senior housemaster, to be in overall charge, and it was made clear that Dr. Holmes had no real insight into the character of the housemaster of the New House.

The Condor set sail from Southampton, where school cruises still commence today, though trams no longer pass under the Bargate which was nearly the cause of Gussy losing his head in a literal fashion. The series was as leisurely as the Edwardian age in which it was written. No. 27 was devoted to the idea of the cruise and No. 28 ended with the ship's departure. The third number had some drama though it was mainly light-hearted. Mr. Ratcliff was still in his cabin suffering from mal-de-mer, but he emerged in No. 30 and events took an entirely different turn.

Mr. Railton said to his colleagues, "Ratcliff is the man to assume boundless authority, but not to make himself respected. His whole system is to muddle and interfere". The climax came when he unsuccessfully attempted to flog Tom Merry and in the end Mr. Railton threatened to wrest authority from Mr. Ratcliff if the latter refused to give way. This was one of the earliest of Hamilton's dramatic confrontations between masters, and if it lacked some of the irony to be found in later years it still possessed the maximum power and conviction.

After this point, the series began to ebb away. The Condor had a hole blown in its keel, and the St. Jim's boys were put up at a commercial college named Headland in Norfolk where some customary ragging took place. No. 32 was a curious postscript. Back at St. Jim's,

Skimpole persuaded Gussy to return to Norfolk to help him salvage his microscope from the wreckage. The exact geographical location of St. Jim's must have been somewhat vague at that time, for the two juniors took a train from Wayland to King's Cross, which took fifty minutes, and then boarded a Yarmouth train at the same London terminus. Earlier in the same series we were told that the Wayland to Southampton train had come from London. Wherever St. Jim's was in 1908 it certainly wasn't in Sussex, and however Charles Hamilton travelled in those days it seems highly unlikely that he made much use of the railway system.

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SCHOOL AND SPORT - A FINAL THOUGHT

by Laurie Sutton

In the Editor's footnote to my article on "School and Sport" in the February C.D. the question is asked whether, if Hamilton sold the St. Kit's stories to the A.P. he would have included even a small part written in by some sub author? The Editor adds that it is a mystery to which any solution seems unlikely nearly sixty years later. Well, I am able to clear up that mystery right now, after borrowing S.O.L. 188 ("Up the Rebels") from the Hamiltonian library of the London O.B.B.C.

S.O.L. 188 confirms my revelation that Charles Hamilton wrote only the first six chapters of "S. & S." No. 9, and that the Rebellion series was concluded in that paper by a sub writer. I suggested in my C.D. Annual article that Hamilton might have supplied his own ending for the S.O.L. reprint (or, as it transpires, earlier, for the 1925 Boys' Friend weekly). The conclusion is S.O.L. 188, following on from Hamilton's stopping point in "S. & S." No. 9 (end of chap. 6) comprises 25,000 words - the identical length of the previous eight weekly episodes published in "S. & S.". The probability surely is that Hamilton had already written the ninth weekly episode for "S. & S." but held it back in order to put some pressure on H. A. Hinton to honour his obligation regarding payment for the stories.

Incidentally, there is considerable abridgement in S.O.L. 188 of the "S. & S." published part of the Rebellion series, as a total of 75,000 words (three weeks of "S. & S.") was too long for even the enlarged 96-page S.O.L. Despite this, they got it wrong, for the story ends on page 90, and there is a 5-page "fill-up" of a Rookwood short story.

However, the reprinted part of the S.O.L. was not re-written in any way from the "S. & S." original. For obvious reasons, the name of Harry Lovell was altered to Harry Wilmot at the time of the first reprint in the Boys' Friend. The Headmaster, Dr. Cheyne, became Dr. Chenies, and the Fourth Form master, Mr. Lathley, became Mr. Rawlings. The latter change was evidently because St. Kit's also had a master named Mr. Rattrey, and Rookwood, of course, had a junior named Lattrey. It is surprising that the St. Kit's Mr. Rattrey was not re-named, but he played only a minor part in the stories.

It is quite clear that it was Hamilton who submitted the St. Kit's MS to the A.P., if only from the fact that it included his own ending to the Rebellion series. In any case, Hinton would have been too well known at the A.P. so soon after his sensation departure, and Hamilton's style and quality would have been immediately recognised in the stories by editorial staff. It does not necessarily follow, though, that it was Hamilton's idea to use St. Kit's in the Boys' Friend weekly - they might even have been suggested at first for the B.F. Library.

Going back to the Editorial Comment to my C.D. Annual article, and the question as to "whether the powers at the A.P. knew in 1924 that they were publishing serials which had already appeared in a defunct rival paper" I personally have not the slightest doubt that they were aware of this fact; doubtless they were informed by Hamilton that Hinton had not paid for the stories, thus giving the latter no claim on their ownership. With Hinton's unique method of publicising "S. & S." at the end of 1921, the A.P. must have been very much aware of their former man's activities - in fact, they made their knowledge public. Is it conceivable that nobody of importance at the A.P. purchased a copy of "S. & S."? Or, having done so, that nobody detected Hamilton's class in the main feature? And there was class in the St. Kit's stories, whether or not our Editor cared much for them (perhaps in comparing them with "The Boy Without a Name?").

Finally, may I say that the reason why I have not queried earlier references to "S. & S." in the C.D. is the quite simple one that, although I have possessed the "S. & S." issues for 15 years, I have only read them during the past two years.

I trust that I have now succeeded in shedding some light on the mystery that has always surrounded that rare publication, "School and Sport".

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News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

MIDLAND

The February meeting at Dr. Johnson's house was attended by eleven members. It was very enjoyable, despite the smaller number.

Our usual features, Anniversary Number and Collectors' Item, were on display. They were A.N. Nelson Lee Library (old series) No. 142, "A Mystery of the Night", published 23rd February, 1918, and 64 years old to the day. The Collectors' Item was a 1982 Greyfriars Calendar published by Mary Cadogan and John Wernham. Only 150 copies were printed. All have been sold and it is out of print.

We are now starting our meetings earlier and find that there is more time for discussion. There was plenty of discussion on this occasion. Had Howard Baker's reprints had a bad or good effect on the hobby? Had it devalued the precious collections of many members? Our members, one of whom has perhaps one of the most comprehensive collections in the country, were strongly in favour of the Howard Baker reprints. In fact those with complete collections wished to have a complete set of Howard Baker books as well.

There was time for two readings, one by your correspondent and one by Ivan Webster, both from that admirable collection of readings, Lawrence Sutton's, "Greyfriars for Grown-ups".

Greyfriars Bingo was the order of the day next and a new member, Keith Normington, won one round and Christine Brettell the other.

Joan Golen again provided the bulk of the refreshments, but other members provided chocolates. It was a cheery party.

Tom Porter brought news that a Mr. Harley of Cradley Heath had died recently. His collection of Nelson Lees is being sold. The address is Mrs. Harley, 214 Saltwells Road, Netherton, Dudley, West Midlands, if anyone is interested.

We meet again on 27th April.

All good wishes to O.B.B.C. enthusiasts everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD - Correspondent.

CAMBRIDGE

We met at the home of Roy Whiskin on Sunday, 7th March, 1982. It was with much pleasure that the club welcomed Neville Wood, with the added pleasure of having Ruth Wood along as well. It was also glad to have Mr. John Taverner as a guest, and the club hope very much that he will visit us again.

Bill Lofts produced the catalogue of old boys' books prepared for an exhibition at Oldenberg University in Germany. It contained some fine illustrations from British comics and boys' books.

Neville Wood gave a long and interesting talk on the history of the detective story. He produced a splendid display of books, including bibliographies, encyclopedias, and Sherlockiana, on the detective story. He spoke of the locked room mystery that had occurred at Sidney Sussex College, during his own residence in Cambridge, a real life case which he had written up for an American magazine; he expressed the opinion that the matter had never been finally solved. He spoke of the skits and pastiches that had appeared in Punch and other papers. Switching to "Thrillers" he mentioned Edgar Wallace, whose prolific output had once been lampooned in the cartoon of the man at the book stall asking "Have you got the midday Edgar Wallace?" He recalled Dorothy Sayers three volumes of "Tales of Detection, Mystery and Horror" and stories of Lord Peter Wimsey; Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine; and other writers of studies of the detective story. He spoke of the rather tiresome mannerisms of H. C. Bailey's "Reggie Fortune" and "Josh Clunk". He recalled also the many magazines devoted to crime stories in general. A reference to "Nero Wolfe" included mention of the "Nero Wolfe Cook Book". Among his concluding items he mentioned the work of literary detection of Messrs. Lofts and Adley - Bill Lofts suitably blushed!

Neville's talk was applauded warmly. After enjoying Roy and Mrs. Whiskin's excellent tea, meeting concluded with a literary quiz by Neville, and a musical quiz by Roy.

Roy and Mrs. Whiskin were warmly thanked for their hospitality.

LONDON

There was an excellent attendance at the March Walthamstow meeting and it was pleasing to see Bob Blythe in person once more. His Musical competition was jointly won by Millicent Lyle and Winifred Morss, but it was left to Terry Beenham, assisted by his Rosemary to get the anagram correct, the initial letters of musical items giving Chums, Captain and Boys' Own Paper. Extracts from three newsletters of 1965 were the trip down memory lane which Bob read from his file.

A tape recording dealing with the centenary of A. A. Milne of Winnie the Pooh fame was played over by Mary Cadogan.

At long last, the stranglehold of the Hamilton scholars on the various competitions dealing with this subject was broken as new member, Chris Harper romped home an easy winner in Laurie Sutton's Magnet Series competition. However, the second place was shared by Ann Clarke and Winnie Morss.

Josie Packman, in her capacity of being both chairman and Sexton Blake librarian, read the excellent article by Ronald Blowse that appeared in Volume Three of the Story Paper Collector and which was entitled "The First Stories of Sexton Blake". Roy Parsons was adjudged to be the winner of Jim Cook's Memorial Verse Competition. Next meeting at the residence of Tony Rees, 34 Old Charlton Road, Shepperton, Middlesex, Telephone Walton on Thames, STD 98. Kindly note that the date is Sunday, 18th April, and a full tea will be provided.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Eleven members were present on a blustery, but otherwise pleasant evening on 13th March.

Chairman Harry Barlow gave an entertaining talk on Nelson Lee (but he admitted he found Bob Blythe's comprehensive research into the Nelson Lee saga, invaluable!). Harry gave us an insight into some of the details concerning the first story, dates of publication and some of the characters involved. During this talk, members were asked to

jot down as many names, places, etc., that appeared in the paper through the years of publication. This resulted in some amusement (as is often the case with Harry's quizzes!) as he invariably gave out some "answers" as he delivered his talk. Unfortunately very few of our members are afficianados of Nelson Lee, but Norman Smith did get the highest score of 22 points and Keith Balmforth came second, with 17. Norman was presented with a book prize by Harry.

After refreshments, Joe Wood gave a talk on The Magnet - referring to some of the names involved and how they often characterised in themselves, Charles Hamilton's creations; i.e. Mr. Prout was a most appropriate name and Mr. Quelch gave the impression of a thin, austere master. Over the years "Bunter" had become a household name, when it referred to greediness. Charles Hamilton had modelled some of his characters on living people. Reference was made to the high moral standard set in The Magnet.

Our next meeting will be the Saturday prior to Easter Day - 10th April, and will be our Annual General Meeting commencing at 7.00 p.m.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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The Postman Called

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

H.E. PRICE (Chatham): Some fifty years ago a weekly magazine was published called "I Was There." It was issued over many weeks and was finally concluded at 1806 pages. It comprised the personal experiences of survivors of the First World War.

I collected the whole run of these magazines, and had them bound in two volumes. Unfortunately the binders removed the covers - so the actual dates and the publisher's name went with those covers.

Have you any knowledge of these magazines? I would very much like to know when they were published and by whom.

(Can anyone help Mr. Price? - Ed.)

FRED GRIFFIN (New York): I found the recent song competition very interesting and enjoyable. I had 11 songs correct. Some of them were

English Music Hall ones with which I am not well acquainted, although I know some of them. "Burlington Bertie" I know very well. I heard Ella Shields sing it in New York years ago; she also sang it at the Theatre Royal, Dublin.

The discussion about P.C.49 was interesting. A friend of mine from Dublin told me he heard the song as a mere boy in Ireland about 1915. He sang it for me. It goes like this:

'I'm P.C.49,

Anyone can have this little job of mine.

They tied me to a lamp-post and set me all on fire,

The Sergeant said 'You're a German spy', but I said 'You're a liar -

I'm P.C.49!'"

R. J. LEWIS (Neston): I refer to that very interesting article in last July's C.D. - The Magnet's "Infamous Five", by Len Wormull, regarding the various hostelries in and around Friardale.

I have recently been reading Magnets Nos. 418/9, and have come across another licenced premises, which was not given in the above, the Friardale Arms.

It is really quite astounding how a small village like Friardale can support three public houses - The Cross Keys, The Red Cow and The Friardale Arms - not to mention the two riverside inns - The Waterside Arms and The Feathers - which if not actually in the village are just on the outskirts.

There can only be one answer - the population of Friardale are an outstanding community of elbow-lifters, and a nightmare to the Temperance Society, or should it now be the Alcoholics Anonymous, of Kent.

It will be noted that I have not included The Three Fishers in the above list. In my opinion it is just far enough away from the village to exclude it as being regarded as a Friardale 'local', but still, I will admit, within easy walking distance for those magnificent toppers of Friardale.

M. S. FELLOWS (London): C.D. is always a joy to read and is eagerly awaited.

I am so pleased that you have enjoyed A. A. Thomson's "Exquisite Burden". It has always been a favourite of mine, although I no longer own a copy, alas! At the beginning of the last war, I was evacuated to Harrogate, as my father was a civil servant. I found that the book was extremely popular at that time. Local residents claimed to be able to identify certain characters; but I don't know if they were right. When I was sent to Harrogate Grammar School, I found that A. A. Thomson's daughter was in the same class and we became good friends. She was a delightful girl, with red hair, and a delicious sense of humour. I went away to University and then the army and lost touch with her. I gathered that her father was 'obsessed' with cricket. I well remember going to Bradford to take my 'London Matric'. I had recently heard J. B. Priestley give one of his famous postscripts about a pie shop there, where the pie on the window was always steaming. Of course, I had to go there for lunch and enjoyed it very much. I remember you were right about having to do Maths and English and three other subjects. But if you were not too good at Maths you could take an alternative lower paper provided you did an extra subject. I did English, Lower Maths, French, History and Latin - and I think the English Lit. paper. It was quite exciting. Another day I had my lunch in a hotel and Teddy Brown the fat xylophonist was there, too. I was amazed that he was not as fat as he seemed to be on the stage. Perhaps he padded.

J. BURSLEM (Runwell): Thank you for the Golden Booklet each month. It irons out the Creased Brow.

JACK MURTAGH (New Zealand): I have spent some very pleasant hours browsing through the C.D. Annuals from 1947 to 1980. What happy memories they bring back, spanning, as they do, 34 years. Now, while the Nelson Lee and Magnet are my favourite papers, followed by U.J. and Gem, one article has always stuck in my mind even though it was not about my favourite old paper. It was one reason why I wanted to find it again that I started looking through the Annuals. The article was "The Tom Merry Cavalcade" in the 1959 Annual - in my opinion, one of the finest articles ever. I suggest that you spend half-an-hour reading it yourself. I'm sure you'll enjoy it as much as I do every time I read it.

May I also suggest that it would be well-received if it was reprinted in the next Annual. In fact, I feel that quite a lot of early articles are worthy of reprinting.

W. T. THURBON (Cambridge): May I add a personal footnote to Ernest Holman's "A Study in Saga". Among the Sherlock Holmes actors he mentions "Eille Norwood". In the early 1920's I watched from the college office windows of St. John's College, Cambridge, part of the film of "The Three Students" being filmed in the Second Court of the College. Some thirty years later, as Bursar's Clerk of the College I had passed to me an enquiry from a member of the Sherlock Holmes Society about the date of the installation of electric light in the College? The writer, a member of the Sherlock Holmes Society, had been up at Cambridge at the time the 1920's film was "shot". As an undergraduate athlete, he had been on Fenners, the University cricket and athletic ground, and had been roped in, with other undergraduates as "extras" in scenes filmed on that ground. He was anxious to "prove" in the Society's Journal that the "St. Luke's College" of the "Three Students" was St. John's. I corresponded with him, and eventually met him for a tour of the College, but in the end we had to reluctantly agree that we could not make "St. Luke's" and St. John's fit.

Eille Norwood's real name was Brett (Anthony Edward Brett) and he was a member of St. John's College, taking his B.A. in the 1880's.

T. KEEN (Thames Ditton): Did Frank Richards officially dispose of Alonzo Todd way back before the early 1920's? Admittedly, Alonzo crops up in several stories during the 1920's, but these tales appear to be the work of the sub writers.

When Study No. 7 is mentioned in the genuine Frank Richards' stories, the occupants are Peter Todd, Tom Dutton, and of course, Bunter.

As during the 1930's, F.R. reintroduced Alonzo into a holiday series, I assume that the Duffer must have been sent packing many years before. If so ... when?

THRILLING STORIES

by W. O. G. Lofts

Recently whilst doing some research into The Wizard, Rover, Adventure, Skipper and Hotspur - D. C. Thomson papers running in the thirties, and known as another Famous Five, I can quite understand the huge readership they commanded. Boys who were either not keen or wanted to get away from the public school stories, certainly found here gripping, thrilling, colourful tales of adventure often set in other lands, sometimes bordering on the fantasy but all the same extremely readable in a basic form of script that was always to the point - with never long windness - with sharp dramatic short sentences.

Many of the more famous characters have been documented in the past such as "The Black Sapper", Wolf of Kabul, and the immortal Wilson, but certainly some stories gave me much food for thought, especially those in the Rover in the 1933/4, which had the comic strip of 'Nosey Parker' in its pages.

A serial entitled 'The Last Man Alive' gave an account of an aviator who had been cut off from civilisation, only to return to find that everyone had seemingly been wiped out by some mysterious plague. Animals had not been affected, so he had dramatic battles with wolves, rats, and domestic animals gone wild - all searching for food. I feel certain that a film had been made of this theme in post-war years.

Another most startling serial in 1934 was 'The Black Revolt' where to overcome a serious labour problem, Britain had imported millions of black workers, who in time revolted and marched from provincial cities on to London. All were dressed in overalls, looked alike, and carried large clubs! Of course it was absurd, as Social history proves that in those days there was mass unemployment in England, and the days of the depression that many of us remember.

Dwarfs were another attraction, white ones from the Arctic Circle in the Rover entitled 'King of the Ice-Dwarfs' - whilst the Adventure had black traditional ones invading other lands. One dramatic picture had one pygmy riding through the sea in a syrup tin.

On the other hand, and I suppose it was to be expected, some stories had a rather familiar ring of being done long before. 'Britain Invaded' by hords of yellow men had been written by several

Edwardian writers - whilst 'Voxy Val' the ventriloquist, had been based on the 'Val Vox' in the A.P. comic Puck - but even this, and all other ventriloquist stories had been cribbed from Henry Cockton's character of Valentine Vox that was published as far back as 1840! A series of Dick Turpin stories - the dashing highwayman was another character that was a must for boys to read of his thrilling escapades on Black Bess.

Certainly there were school stories, but more of a slapstick variety than Greyfriars and St. Jim's. Apart from the famous Red Circle in the Hotspur, there was 'Wily Watkins' a 16-year old boy of the Shell Form at school who was also a Form Master - shades of G. R. Samways Wally Bunter tales at Greyfriars. 'Chung Soo' was another series of a Chinese boy very similar to Wun Lung of the Magnet - more so when he was often called a 'Yellow Heathen'. But then it must be said that the majority of D. C. Thomson papers creations were completely original, and not to be found in any other boys literature.

Many years ago now, a Director of D. C. Thomson told me that the editors had more to do with the stories than the writers - hence them not using authors names. Editors not only suggested characters, plots, themes, and ideas, but also had to do an awful lot of re-writing to make them all read in the same sort of style. Certainly over the years, I have had quite a few queries pertaining to the 'Famous Five' as they were called, and so obviously the stories have some nostalgic happy memories for a number of old readers.

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OBITUARY

We regret to learn of the recent death of Miss Mary Sims of the Portman Book Shop. Miss Sims was well-known to many C.D. readers, and her bright and intelligent services will be missed in the hobby. The Portman Book Shop will continue under the guidance of Miss Mary Cammidge, who was Miss Sims's partner.

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SALE: Magnets and Gems - 50 for £45. Also Lees (o.s.), Thomsons, C.D's, C.D. Annuals, etc.

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OLD HEROES - AND THE FILMS

by Esmond Kadish

There is a lovely story told of how, in the late 'thirties, the Hollywood publicity people came up with the slogan: "Movies Are Your Best Entertainment", in order to boost flagging box-office takings, but hastily abandoned it when they realised what the initial letters spelled! Like many other youngsters in the 'thirties, I was a frequent visitor to the cinema in what must surely have been its Golden Age.

Clutching my ninepence, sixpence, or even fourpence (old money!) I would toddle along to one of the local cinemas, sink gratefully into the plush seat, and lose myself for a few hours. Curiously, I would really care what happened to the characters on the silver screen in a way that I rarely experience now when I watch the telly.

Somehow, though, the magic of the movies never quite seemed to be captured by the writers in the old papers when they dealt with film-making. The characters in the stories were often caricatures, and authors often found it difficult to resist the temptation to "send up" the whole unreal business of film production. Charles Hamilton's 1929 Hollywood series in the "Magnet" is probably the most well-known of those on a film theme - it is certainly the longest. I wouldn't be without it, of course, but it doesn't really ring true, and I doubt whether "Myron Polk" - whose name suggests an agent or producer rather than an actor - would have offered much competition to Douglas Fairbanks, Snr., or the young Gary Cooper. His bitter feud with "schoolboy film star" Harry Wharton seems far-fetched and improbable.

In the girls' papers, films were a frequent and popular subject. There were cautionary tales, like "Film-Struck Fay", which was featured in "The Crystal", when it started life as a paper for older girls, and before it became "Girls' Crystal". I doubt, somehow, whether it really discouraged aspiring Hedy Lamarrs. In the 1933 "Schoolgirl", John Wheway, as Hilda Richards, wrote a short series of Cliff House stories entitled "Bessie Crashes into Films" in which she literally does just that. She chases Ting-a-Ling, a pet pekinese with a mind of his own, into the local Enterprise film studios, where mistress and dog cause the inevitable chaos. Mr. Pontifex, the producer, immediately offers Bessie a part in his film:- "I want a girl who can

put over the slapstick stuff, and a dog that's clever. Good looks don't matter of course - Ahem! No offence, Miss Bunter! " Bessie herself is portrayed sympathetically and delightfully, and to great advantage - a far cry from her former existence as the unprepossessing female fat Owl of the previous decade - and the series serves as a prelude to the inevitable trip to America and Hollywood by the Cliff House girls in the summer of '33.

An unusual serial with a film background was "Pen's Quest in Filmland", written for the "Schoolgirls' Weekly" by Hilary Marlow, otherwise Reg Kirkham. The story is prefaced thus: "Real film stars gave permission for their names to be used in this story, and there are descriptions of real films being made". Pen Holliday, the heroine, is a conjurer, a feminine version of Greyfriars' Oliver Kipps. The plot involves her escorting a young friend, who has "lost her memory", around the British studios, in order to trace the latter's uncle, and she is hindered in her search by a character with the improbable name of Mr. Thistleberry, whose favourite exclamation in moments of stress is: "Roses round the door!" The girls tour such British studios, in existence at the time, as Shepherds Bush, Elstree, Gaumont British and Gainsborough. There are interesting descriptions of contemporary films being made, such as, "I Was a Spy" with Conrad Veidt, Herbert Marshall and Madeleine Carroll; "Henry VIII" with Charles Laughton; and "Friday the Thirteenth" with Jessie Matthews and Max Miller. Producer, Alexander Korda and director Victor Saville are also conscripted into the story, and it is amusing, if not quite credible, to read of Miss Matthews actually proffering advice and sympathy to our heroine's young protégée.

Another pleasant piece of fiction with a film theme is "St. Frank's in the 'Talkies' ", a single story in the "School Train" series in the "Nelson Lee" in the summer of 1929. Willy Handforth picks up a golf ball, on a course in the Southampton area, which belongs to Colonel Owen, a peppery but charming old gentleman whose bark is far worse than his bite. Willy, with his usual canniness, worms his way into the colonel's favour by advising him as to the most suitable club to play, and there is much mysterious reference to cleeks, mid-irons, mashies, niblicks and so on. It turns out that the colonel happens to be chairman

of the "British Bulldog Film Co.". Willy wangles an invitation to see some filming on the Isle of Wight with a large party of St. Frank's juniors. Naturally, they get involved in the actual shooting of the "epic" which includes a fight sequence, a fire, and an explosion aboard a derelict vessel. Willy's major, Edward Oswald, is, for once, genuinely funny as he leads the juniors into a "punch-up" with a gang of make-believe roughs, with cries of "Come on, St. Frank's!" and "Back up, Remove!" Fortunately, it's only a rehearsal. Mr. Brooks, who apparently wrote a few film scripts himself, seems, as usual, well up in the technical detail of the early sound films, and, altogether, it's an entertaining story.

Incidentally, whatever became of that Greyfriars film they proposed making in the thirties? A pity it never was - although, on second thoughts, perhaps not - it might have shattered some of our cherished illusions if they had actually filmed it!

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LITTLE ACORNS

by Ernest Holman

My collection of P. G. Wodehouse books has recently received an addition. It is entitled "My Man Jeeves" and is a frail edition of one of the first Penguins of the thirties. (Priced then at sixpence, for which I have paid sixteen times that price!)

There are four Jeeves stories and four stories of a character named Reggie Pepper in this book. "Leave It to Jeeves" turns out to be the original story of "The Artistic Affair of Corky". The other three were entitled "Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest", "Jeeves and the Hard-Boiled Egg" and "The Aunt and the Sluggard". You will find all four today in "Carry On Jeeves"; but - with the exception of a few omissions from "Hard-Boiled Egg" - the other stories have all undergone re-writing from their originals.

The Reggie Pepper stories were virtually stories (without Jeeves) of an earlier Bertie Wooster type. One of them, especially, is worthy of mention. "Helping Freddie" is a story of Reggie Pepper, Freddie Meadows and Jimmy Pinkerton. For "Carry On Jeeves" this story was considerably amended and became "Fixing It For Freddie". Reggie was to change into Bertie Wooster, Freddie was to change his

surname and Jimmy Pinkerton was to be excluded entirely. In the latter's place, requiring much alteration, appears Jeeves. So, in today's "Carry On Jeeves" are five stories, adapted from earlier events of about 1919.

In the introduction to "My Man Jeeves" P.G. is quoted as saying that he first mentioned Jeeves in "Extricating Young Gussie" (Jeeves makes two brief entrances but otherwise plays no part in the story) and that he blushed later to think of the off-hand way he had treated the man at their first encounter. (The "Gussie" story formed part of a 1917 collection of short stories under the title of "The Man With Two Left Feet" - republished in hard back in 1971 and in Penguin some few years later. The story is referred to in the 'Corky' affair.)

When "Carry On Jeeves" was first published, P.G. wrote a new story for the opening of the book entitled "Jeeves Takes Charge" and described how Jeeves first came under the Wooster banner. Chronologically speaking, one would have to assume that at the time of 'Gussie', Jeeves was in disfavour as an adviser!

The stories in "My Man Jeeves" are more than a collection - little acorns, really!

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