

STORY PAPER

# COLLECTORS DIGEST

DECEMBER  
1983

VOL 37  
No 444



34<sub>P</sub>

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ANOTHER YULETIDE

Something like a warm glow comes in our hearts, I would think, as we look back on the Christmases we knew when we were youngsters. But that comment can only apply to those who are getting towards what Shakespeare calls the sere and yellow leaf.

Christmas gets more and more commercialised; more and more mechanised. It seems to me that the further back you go,

the better the Christmases were. It wasn't only that one had the magnificent Christmas Numbers of our papers, though they were important, and, as you travel back over them, they get better and better. And those before 1914 are a dream of delights.

But the childhood - and long after childhood - Christmases I can remember are far different from the Christmases we know in these times. Long ago, we made our own amusements. We prepared everything ourselves - even a great many of the decorations. Mum made not only the mince pies but the mincemeat as well. She made the lemon curd. She made the puddings, and boiled them all through one red-letter day. Mum doesn't do much like that now. She gets Mrs. Peak's Christmas puddings, Waitrose mincemeat, Co-op lemon curd, a frozen turkey. She pays the supermarket with a cheque which she has forgotten to prepare in advance, while long, long queues of fuming people stretch out behind her. It's all so easy now. Or is it?

We used to send our turkey for baking to a nearby bakehouse early on Christmas morning. And then collect it ready for lunch. One year our turkey got burnt in the bakehouse. I recall my father, sorrowfully, telling my uncle about the burning of the turkey. "I should think you were annoyed", said my uncle.

"Annoyed! I was grieved!" said my father with deep feeling. We laughed about it for years afterwards.

In my younger days we always had a family party at Christmas. My aunt and uncle and two cousins came along on Christmas Eve, and usually went home on New Year's Day. Christmas evening and Boxing Evening were devoted to what I suppose would be called "parlour games". Games like Happy Families and the similarly constructed game called Counties of England. In the first you collected members of a family; in the second towns of a county. You had to keep an eye up for the cheats, for, before you could try to collect a family - Brisket the Butcher for instance - you must hold in your hand one member of the family.

And a sing-song round the piano. What did we sing? "My Golden Dream-Boat"; "Swanee"; "A Song at Twilight",

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"Barnacle Bill, the Sailor"; "Dancing with Tears in my Eyes". Maybe. Something like that. Then supper. Then another game. Yes, we made our own entertainment. And on the third day of Christmas, we probably all went to the cinema or, maybe, to the panto at the local theatre.

Different today? Hour after hour of television, perhaps. Special Christmas programmes which lack atmosphere because they were made, specially for Christmas, months earlier. Alas.

A final thought. In the very early days of the O.B.B. Clubs, we often adapted the old parlour games to provide entertainment, and it worked very well indeed. Happy Families, for instance! In place of the 'families', one substitutes various groups of characters. For instance, the Famous Five, the Fistical Four, the Terrible Three, Coker & Co., Barbara Redfern & Co., and so on ad infinitum.

It doesn't take a lot of organising for some keen person. Postcards cut in half, so that you have about 60 of them, with a character's name on each - and you have your pack. It is a game which can be played easily and pleasantly if the number of people present is not too large. And the one who holds the greatest number of complete "families" at the end is the winner and takes the star prize. Plenty other old parlour games can be adapted in the same way, and make a change from Bingo and the like.

And, when I was a child, Bingo was called Lotto. Anyone remember?

Yes, those Christmas games on those far distant Christmas evenings were memorable. Think wistfully of them as you stifle a yawn in front of the TV set this Christmas.

### HORATIO

Danny reminded us that it is 50 years since Horatio Bottomley, editor of John Bull for many years, passed on.

That he was an outsize fraud all his life there is not much denying, but he had something which seems short among public figures these days - personality. What a real personality he was! A fine orator; a persuasive writer when he took the trouble to write

the hundreds of articles which appeared under his name; a reckless gambler; a quick eye for the possibility of making a dishonest thousand or two. John Bull to his finger-tips, in an odd way. He is reputed to have drunk champagne with every meal.

He had a big racing stable and a magnificent house named "The Dicker", near Eastbourne. I wonder whether it is still there.

The area where I live has a link with Bottomley. Not far away winds the Basingstoke Canal, which runs pleasantly through lovely country by rural towpaths for 30 miles from Basingstoke to the Thames at Weybridge. A tranquil, peaceful walk can be had along those paths, a meeting with the swans, a skiff or a canoe on the waters, or a trip on a river-boat with the sunshine filtering through the trees and the rhododendrons blooming, in profusion in Spring.

Very early in the century Bottomley bought the canal for £6000. According to his biographer, it was long disused and there was no water in it. Personally, I doubt the accuracy of that. Certainly it was long disused as a normal canal, but I find it hard to think that it was dry. At any rate, there is plenty of water in it these days.

Bottomley floated a company to develop the canal. He sold thousands of shares in it, but, like most of Bottomley's companies, the shares yielded no dividends, and the promoter pocketed what investors had paid for the shares. Some years later he sold the canal. Today it is owned by Hampshire and Surrey jointly, and a flourishing Canal Society (of which I am a modest member) has set about restoring it to its original beauty.

Bottomley edited a number of papers in his time, and one of the most obscure was Mary Bull. I remember, when I was a small lad, seeing a copy of Mary Bull at my grandmother's home. I seem to recall that it was of the same format as John Bull, but had a mauve cover. I wonder whether there are any copies still in existence.

Bottomley was a clever man in his way, but he was also stupid. For years he was paid £7500 a year to write a weekly

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article for the Sunday Pictorial, though mostly it was ghost written. He threw up that substantial income in order to start his own paper, Sunday Illustrated, which failed.

A clever man, a stupid man, a scamp. But what a personality!

THE ANNUAL

All being well, during December and well before Christmas, the new Collectors' Digest Annual will be coming your way. The 37th of them. It's a bit breathtaking, isn't it?

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

I wish every one of you, my very dear friends, a Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and a Prosperous New Year. It seems no time since I was sending you that same old greeting, yet twelve months have swept by in a flash.

God bless you this Christmas - and always.

THE EDITOR

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A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM "MADAM"

I am so sorry I cannot write individually to all the lovely C.D. people who sent messages and beautiful cards during my illness.

They, and your Prayers, meant so much to both Eric and myself. They were a great source of strength during the dark days.

I wish you all a Very Happy Christmas, and God Bless you.

BEATRICE

\* \* \* \* \*

WANTED: "Boys' Cinema" weekly with any chapters of "Lost City", Warners first silent serial.

HOWE, Keystone Cinema, Box 2, Alberton 5014, South Australia.

Xmas Greetings to all my Collector friends -

CHARLES VAN RENEN, SOUTH AFRICA

# Danny's Diary

DECEMBER 1933

Here we are nearly at the end of the year, and 1933 has broken all records during the long summer. It was the driest and warmest summer known, ever since records were kept. According to the records, taken at Kew, there were 1759 hours of sunshine.

But that's all behind us, and Christmas is here.

The new series of King of the Islands has continued in Modern Boy, and every story has been great. First of the month was entitled "Ken King's Joy-Ride". Ken is ashore in Tahiti, and once again he comes across the mysterious Mr. Jam, who figured in the tales last month. The second story, and this was in the Modern Boy Christmas Number, is "Treasure of Tunaviva". In this one, Billy, the beachcomber, says that there is Pink Coral worth five pounds an ounce on the island. Ken King wonders, but Mr. Jam has no doubt.

Then "Trouble in Tahiti". Ken finds Tahiti the most lovely island he has ever seen, but he meets trouble there. Next, "Outcase of the South Seas" in which Ken walks into deadly danger for the sake of a wastrel. Finally, "On the Pink Coral Trail", with Ken seeking an island which is made of the valuable stuff.

There is a new serial in Modern Boy entitled "Thunder Ahead" which is supposed to be written by Sir Malcolm Campbell. I wonder if he knows he wrote a story. Also in the paper there continues the Captain Justice stories - he has found a Secret Kingdom. And the Great War tales about Grey Shadow by George E. Rochester. Plus the tales of Red Hot Horton and his trusty Norton motor-bike, by Kaye Campson. And, of course, oozles of advertisements.

The Schoolboys' Own Exhibition is on at the White City, and it will run from Boxing Day till mid-January. There are lots of things to interest young boys and old boys, and lots of models

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you can operate yourselves. I hope to go one day before it ends.

In the Sexton Blake Library there is a new story called "The Man from Tokio" and it introduces Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie. It's a bit disappointing, though, for I'm sure it isn't written by the old writers of the Grant and Julie tales. The new writer of this one is Warwick Jardine.

Two good stories in the Schoolboys' Own Library for Christmas. "Bunter the Benevolent" tells of Bunter ordering goods from Chunkley's stores - he excuses himself on the grounds that he had a brain-storm, and then, in the same book, comes the tale of Bunter reading Dickens' "Christmas Carol" and, as a result, becoming almost a philanthropist.

The other tale is "The St. Jim's Ghost-Hunters" with Tom Merry & Co. on holiday in France in a thrilling adventure at the Chateau Cernay. I enjoyed them both.

In real life in France there has been the most terrible rail disaster in French history. It occurred at Lagny, 15 miles from Paris, where two trains were in an awful collision. Over 200 people have been killed in that disaster.

Lovely month in the Gem with the continuation of the series about Tom Merry losing all his money. "Rallying Round Tom Merry" tells how his chums set out to try to help Tom Merry without hurting his pride. Next, "Down on His Luck". No work - no food - no money. That's Tom Merry's plight, adrift in London. He comes across three men who befriend him - two white men and a black man. They are named Jim, Buck, and Rastue - and I'd bet my hat that they are Jack, Sam, and Pete in disguise.

Then, in the Gem's Christmas Number, comes "Gussy the Ghost" with Tom Merry persuaded to spend Christmas at Eastwood House. Next, "The Ramblers' Recruit" with Tom Merry playing for the Ramblers' Football Club against the St. Jim's First Eleven. Finally, "The Fags' Form-Master" with Tom Merry taking charge of the Third Form at St. Jim's during the temporary absence of the real master. And Mr. Macdonald, the artist, shows Tom wearing cap and gown - which really doesn't make sense, does it?

But a lovely month in the Gem, all the same. And every

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week there is a long instalment of the new St. Frank's serial "The White Giants of El Dorado".

In the weeks running up to Christmas there is not usually anything to write home about in the cinemas, for people are too busy to go to the pictures much. Still, our lot haven't been too bad.

One of our cinemas, for a novelty, had a Sherlock Holmes Week. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday they showed "Sherlock Holmes", and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday they showed "A Study in Scarlet". In a way it was a bit confusing for those who saw both films, for Reginald Owen was Dr. Watson in the first film, and played Sherlock Holmes in "Study in Scarlet".

The other pictures this month have been Ken Maynard in "King of the Arena", a good western; Pat O'Brien and Ralph Bellamy in "Destination Unknown"; and with that one there was a lovely Laurel and Hardy 2-reeler "Me and My Pal"; Stanley Lupino in "Facing the Music", and, finally, Clark Gable and Jean Harlow in "Hold Your Man" about a tough girl who falls in love with a confidence trickster. I really didn't care a lot for the last named.

It's sad, but two tramway services have closed down at the end of the year. The trams at Yarmouth have gone, and the trams of the South Lancashire Company.

A tremendous month in the Magnet. The Strong Alonzo series continued with "The Greyfriars Hercules". Alonzo, with the aid of Prof. Sparkinson's wonderful fluid, became a terrific fighter. Talk about a Carnera. It was magnificent fun. Then in "The Reformer of the Remove" Alonzo set about using his great strength for the purpose of reforming the black sheep - and getting his own way. But it was a case of singly we fall, all united and we win. And the whole lot united against Alonzo, and his teeth were drawn.

Last in this fine series is "Bunter the Bully". Bunter comes on Alonzo's supply of the fluid - and Bunter gets the amazing strength. My word! This was the Magnet's Xmas Number.

Then the start of the Christmas holiday series. Opening tale "The Mystery of Wharton Lodge". Bunter is not given his

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usual welcome at the Lodge. In fact, he is told that, if he turns up, he will be kicked out. But, very secretively, he manages to stow himself away in the attic of Wharton's home. And, all unseen, he causes a row to break out between Wharton and Hurree Singh. One of the Magnet's truly great stories.

Final of the month, "The Ghost of Wharton Lodge", with the Christmas party in full swing, and Bunter still an uninvited guest in the attic.

In my pillow-case on Christmas morning I found my new Holiday Annual from Doug. It is nice to have it, but I must admit that it is a poor affair. Doug himself says it's the worst one ever. The main stories are "A Schoolboys' Honour", about Greyfriars, and "Spoofed", a very good tale of St. Jim's. There is a short King of the Islands tale. But all told, it's disappointing, and not worth five bob.

#### NOTES ON THIS MONTH'S "DANNY'S DIARY"

Granite Grant and Mile. Julie had been absent for some years, and it was due to my activities that they returned to the Sexton Blake saga in 1933. But, unfortunately, to anyone who knew the genuine tales well, it was obvious that the new tale "The Man from Tokio" was not written by the original writer of Grant and Julie.

S. O. L. No. 209 "Bunter the Benevolent" started off with a dozen or so chapters from "Bunter's Brainstorm", a Magnet of early 1927. Then followed the two stories from late in the same year which told of Bunter reforming for a while under the influence of Dickens. (Of interest is the fact that the Brainstorm tale was to turn up again in the S. O. L. a year or so later. By accident or design, one wonders.)

S. O. L. No. 210 "The St. Jim's Ghost Hunters" comprised two stories from the 6-story series which had appeared in the Gem of late 1909. This story should have appeared in 1933 in the Gem, and it is a complete puzzle why it did not do so, turning up instead at this time in the S. O. L. Actually the S. O. L. had one single tale and the Chateau Cernay tale which appeared (in Nov. 1909) as a double-length tale in a Christmas Number. It is pretty obvious that the Cernay tale was really two normal length Gems joined together, and it had not been written as a Christmas tale at all. The odd bits about a Merry Christmas were tacked on to suit the occasion.

This was the series where the postponement took place just as the party was starting off, so the start was delayed, probably to allow for the Christmas Number. The Cernay tale actually appeared four years later in the Gem. Quite inexplicable.

Of the actual 1933 Gem tales, "Rallying Round Tom Merry" had been "Tom Merry's Fix" in 1910. "Down on His Luck" had been "The Search for Tom Merry" in 1910. Jack, Sam,

and Pete, who appeared in the original tale, were now, rather sadly, named Jim, Buck, and Rastus, though the dog remained Rory. (Actually a series of Jim, Buck and Rastus had featured in one of the papers - I forget which paper - and I have always assumed that these were old Pete tales with the names changed.)

"Gussy the Ghost" (the Christmas Number) had been "Tom Merry's Resolve" in 1910. The entire centre of the original tale was now scrapped, and several new chapters were written in by somebody. The section deleted had told of Skimpole's part in a parliamentary election, and was tedious. But the new chapters were uninspired.

"The Ramblers' Recruit" had been "Tom Merry Against St. Jim's" in 1910, and "The Fags' Form-Master" had been "Mr. Merry!" in 1910. Actually, two years had passed in Gem stories between Christmas 1932 and Christmas 1933. I can think of no possible reason for the way they acted.

By 1933 the Holiday Annual had lost a great deal of its earlier charm. "A Schoolboys' Honour", the long Greyfriar's single story was a reprint of "The Scapegoat" from the Magnet of late 1913. The St. Jim's story "Spoofed" was an outstanding humorous single tale which had been entitled "Trimble's Auction" in the Gem of the Spring of 1923.

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# BLAKIANA

Conducted by Josie Packman

Although I am typing these words at the end of October, by the time you read them it will be Christmas so I take this opportunity of wishing everyone a Happy Christmas with lots of cheerful reading from our favourite books, especially the ones with Christmas tales in them.

THE STORY OF TINKER by the late Walter Webb, C.D., 1955  
continued

It was a slightly older Tinker who appeared in a serial written anonymously and presented for publication by Hamilton Edwards in the weekly "Boys' Friend", in the year 1913, and if not the best of stories of Blake's famous assistant, was certainly not lacking in thrills. It described his many tussles with a coldly calculating master criminal known as The Baron, who was assisted in his criminal activities by "The Toff", a crook of similar calibre.

The spirit of Christmas was in the air again, and in the theatres it was rehearsal time. Tinker, having become much interested in the stage, and with a view to emulating H. B. Irving, Lewis Waller and one or two others, had an ambition to play Othello, rather strange in one so young and uneducated, to say the least. But the lad's venture had a very abrupt ending, for having obtained a job in the chorus of a theatrical company, he fell foul of the manager, a bullying type of individual. During a rehearsal, the latter was venting his wrath and spite on one of the pantomime fairies, when much to Tinker's indignation he saw the man reach out and box the little girl's ears. As she dissolved into tears Tinker hurled himself at the manager, butted him in the waistcoat, and deposited him over the footlights into the big drum left by the orchestra. Before the enraged manager could recover Tinker had departed with alacrity leaving all his ambitions behind him, not to mention tearful little girl whose gratitude was so overwhelming that she was heard to vow solemnly to marry him when she grew up.

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Still alone and friendless in the world, and outcast that he was, the young lad, although having lived and run with all the riff-raff street life knows, remained calm and unsullied, and although the temptation to drift into crime had always confronted him the purity of his soul, inherited from the gentle mother he had never known, was a rock of resistance against which such temptations crumbled, as the Crook known as the Baron was soon to discover.

When he came into contact with the master-criminal, Tinker's impetuosity and lack of detective training almost led him to disaster on several occasions, and some of his miraculous escapes from death made exciting reading. One of the most remarkable crooks Tinker ever came into contact with, the Baron was grossly fat with cold fishy eyes, a bland child-like expression on his face when in repose, giving way to something far more menacing and beast-like when roused. The only hint of affection the man allowed himself, was that shown to a sleek white rat, which he fondled in the way an ordinary person would pet a cat or tame rabbit. The ruthlessness and calculated cruelty of the man struck terror in the soul of the friendless boy on the occasions when they clashed, although Tinker was not to wage a lone battle for long, for it was his destiny to fall in with and be befriended by a stranger calling himself Mr. Nemo. The latter, although ostentatiously a member of the 'Baron's' gang of toughs was working secretly against them in an endeavour to secure sufficient evidence to convict the master-criminal on a charge of murdering his brother. Mr. Nemo's real name was Allandale. With the Toff, who was in every way as ruthless, cold-blooded and evil a character as the Baron, the pair constituted as dangerous a combination of criminal intent as even Sexton Blake himself would have cared to pit himself against, but justice emerged triumphant in a climax fought out on the broad bosom of the Thames, when the Baron and the Toff with Tinker held fast a prisoner on a barge, endeavoured to reach safety with their charge. But Mr. Allandale and a friends of his, a young war correspondent named Harley, gave chase in a tug and after a gun battle, victory went to the

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pursuers, with the Toff going to a watery grave and the Baron being brought to justice to answer for his many crimes.

The name of the author who wrote "Tinker's Boyhood" was never disclosed even when it was reprinted later in the Union Jack, but that Cecil Hayter wrote it is no doubt, for his style is unmistakable.

to be continued . . .

## CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS ARE THE "IN" THING

by Raymond Cure

Christmas puddings are the "In" thing. If they are not they ought to be at this time of the year.

Of course there are Christmas pudds and Christmas pudds. The old-fashioned pudding wrapped in clean white linen, circular in appearance and boiled in ye old copper boiler of yesterday, are the ones in mind.

Days of preparation, a quick stir from all the family, fish it out of the boiler, white sauce and a sprig of holly, and Hey-presto. So who would want one of those pre-packed, pre-cooked puddings, (basin type) so flat on top and so flat on the bottom, to be found in the supermarkets?

In this article we refer to the real thing, the Christmas pudding that Charles Dickens and his host of delightful characters knew. Mrs. Cratchett went to bring the pudding up - as in A Christmas Carol. Hello a great deal of steam - the pudding was out of the copper boiler. A smell like washing day, that was the cloth - a smell like a pastry cooks that was the pudding.

I intend to go further in my eulogy of the Christmas Pudding and to add further witness as to its undying appeal by calling further witnesses, to wit Sexton Blake and Tinker.

Perhaps the most Christmassy of all the Sexton Blake volumes is No. 2 (Crime at Christmas) with its four excellent Christmas tales by Gwyn Evans and two mysteries by E. S. Brooks. For the purpose of this article we shall stay with those stories that excel the glories of the Christmas Pudding, further more the puddings that delighted the hearts and appetites of our favourite

detectives, Tinker and friends.

So with the compliments of Gwyn Evans we now have the mystery of Mrs. Bardell's Christmas Pudding. The Christmas spirit is not dead despite the materialism of the present country with its man-made revels and artificial gaieties. "Blake gave one gland at the thickly falling snow. It was if some genial giant up above was pouring a white sauce over this great plum pudding of an earth." I quote to show that in the mind of Blake as in the minds of those of us of the 1920's a Christmas pudding was always round. Here comes the problem - 'Mr. Blake' said Mrs. Bardell, 'I regret to inform you that the Christmas pudding has been stolen - pinched, in a manner of speaking.'

'What' gasped Tinker 'somebody's purloined our pudd? I say Mrs. B. thats a bit thick - I mean I was looking forward to that pudding.'

Looking back on that scene in 1925 from the distance of 1983, a matter of nearly 60 years, I would be guilty of purloining that pudd. myself. It was a real beauty - straight from a copper boiler. I am afraid, in my declined years, I have to make do with one of the super-store efforts. Miserable descendant of those excellent products. But age and the lack of a copper boiler has somewhat reduced the Christmas tide to which I have become accustomed.

I admire the tribute of Gwyn Evans given to Charles Dickens in the following words: "That dinner, it would need the magic pen of the great master of Christmas stories himself to describe it". However Gwyn Evans does the job well himself, as follows: "Then came the dramatic moment before the entry of the Pudding, a noble inspiring object crowned with a bunch of holly".

"What a woman, what a cook" said Inspector Coutts. Splash Page jumped to his feet "I give you another toast gentlemen, "Mrs. Bardell and her incomparable Christmas Pudding" (end of quote).

Ah well, such days, such magnificent appearances of our traditional Christmas puddings are a thing of the past. Today a

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miserable little thing, even a small one portion pudding will be placed in front of you, no sprig of holly, no gasps of admiration. After all there is no thrill toasting your local supermarket for providing the pudding. Along with Sexton Blake and Tinker, Inspector Coutts and Splash Page, let me give a toast to all the ladies who in this year of our Lord 1983 produce from their own copper boiler a magnificent well-rounded Christmas pudding sufficient for all the family

I suppose on reading this, your wife will say 'He'll be lucky'. There will not be many such puddings, if any, owing to, no doubt the shortage of copper boilers. Either way, be it Christmas 1925 or Christmas 1983, Christmas puddings are the 'in' thing. Especially at this time of the year.

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## Nelson Lee Column

COLD COMFORT AT ST. FRANK'S

by William Lister

The weeks previous to Christmas one begins to look around for a little Christmas fare... the LITERARY kind. It's become a habit. By the time the Season of Goodwill arrives, one is in the right mood to receive it with open arms. That way, there's never a dull Christmas.

Mind you! if per chance you pick up a copy of the "School-boys' Own Library' No. 357, the title 'The Christmas Rebels' is somewhat suspect. Who wants to rebel at Christmas or against Christmas? The word 'rebel' is foreign to the Yuletide spirit. Furthermore, a glance at the illustrated cover adds to the despondency. A host of schoolboys, locked in bitter combat, greets the eye, and though the whole scene is covered with snow, one hardly feels like singing 'God rest you, merry Gentlemen'. Hardly a Christmas card scene, to say the least.

Having just read 'Cold Comfort Farm' by Stella Gibbons, a thought occurred that it's going to be a Cold Comfort Christmas

at St. Frank's with a rebellion in progress.

Heretic, that one is apt to be, it appeared that Edwy Searles Brooks had really slipped a disc this time.

Not so! With a few strokes of the pen, E. S. B. plunges us back into the heart of Yuletide joy. Until later chapters, the rebellion was shelved while the boys occupied themselves with the better side of life.

Chapter 10 becomes the highlight of the Yuletide festivities.

Once again Lord Dorrimore throws open his palatial residence. From here on you can have a hum dinger of a Yuletide. Howbeit, it is all condensed in one chapter of four page length.

Ripping meals, plenty to eat when you get peckish in between. Lord Dorrimore's parties were always a grand affair. Dorrimore Hall was a place of laughter, brightness and warmth.

According to E. S. Brooks, electric lights blazed everywhere, great log fires blazed in every room, and there was an air of genial good-fellowship among the guests.

A big lounge hall, ages old, with black oaken beams, and wide-open firegrate. All festooned with strings of tiny gleaming electric lights all the colours of the rainbow.

Brooks could see it all in his mind's eye, and I suppose he hoped we would too.

Decorations, and unlimited amounts of holly and mistletoe. Not forgetting the whole army of servants on hand. Lavish in all things, Dorrimore had not spared his pocket.

A pity it didn't last a little longer. The whole Christmas scene was pushed into Chapter 10. Then on with the rebellion.

Story-rating:- good thrills, excitement, mystery, BUT as a Yuletide tale all I can say is, it's Cold Comfort Christmas at St. Frank's in this yarn.

## THE MOUNT

by C. H. Churchill

In the Nelson Lee column of the August C.D. an "Old Boy" of St. Frank's mentioned the Moor View School, saying he would like to know more about the premises. As I have a large number of early Lees I am able to oblige.

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It was known as "The Mount" previously and at the time it was first mentioned in the Lee was owned by a Mr. Howard Ridgeway, an author, who lived there with his wife. It was an old house and stood upon a high bluff overlooking Bannington moor. It was quite near to St. Frank's actually but isolated from it by the dense woods which intervened. The nearest other dwelling, apart from St. Frank's was a cottage about a half mile away down the slope of the moors.

The first we heard of The Mount was in old series No. 167 "The Moor House Mystery" dated 17.8.18, when Mr. Ridgeway came to consult Nelson Lee regarding mysterious voices which kept disturbing him and his wife at night. This had become so bad that she could not stand it and departed to London but he was determined to stay on and try to solve the mystery.

This story in No. 167 is part of a mini "Circle of Terror/St. Frank's series. In brief, the Circle's agents had occupied the old cottage on the moor in order to provide a haven for when they had succeeded in springing Jim the Penman (Douglas James Sutcliffe) from prison. Owing to this plot they wanted to oust Mr. Ridgeway from The Mount as it was the only place which overlooked this cottage. It would take too much space to go into the whole thing here but the plot came unstuck owing, of course, to Nelson Lee and Jim the Penman returned to prison to resume his sentence. This last episode was related in No. 169 old series "Handforth - Detective" dated 31.8.18.

The next time The Mount came into prominence was a little later on that autumn in the Reggie Pitt series when the Serpent, as he was known as at that time, caused Handforth and Sir Montie to be expelled. As Lee knew they were innocent of their supposed crimes, he arranged for them to stay at The Mount with Mr. and Mrs. Ridgeway while he cleared the matters up.

From this time on, The Mount was rarely mentioned until in No. 436 old small series dated 13.10.23 "A Rod of Iron" in the Buster Boots series, it became famous as the Moor View School.

In this story Archie and Alf Brent were out for a stroll and on reaching The Mount were staggered to see a large board erected

announcing the opening shortly of a girls' school. It had been noticed by some of the boys recently that changes were imminent. An army of workmen were on the site adding a complete new wing to the building. Two distinct outbuildings were also in course of erection with quaint roofs and leaded windows. As Archie and Alf were gazing at the notice board a lady of ample proportions came out and in the course of conversation announced that she was the housekeeper and that fifty young ladies were arriving shortly when the school opened.

Such is the history of the Mount on the edge of Bannington Moor

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 192 - Magnet No. 1038 - "The Mystery of Wharton Lodge"

The Benevolent Bunter series ended with an ignominious ejection from the Park Lane mansion, and Bunter spent the remainder of the Christmas holiday with the Famous Five at Wharton Lodge. It was not quite the same Wharton Lodge of the classical era, since at this time (1927-8) Wadham was the butler and Giles the keeper, but it was undoubtedly the cosy, festive home that was to feature so delightfully in the many years to come.

The only outside characters were two gipsies, Michael a rogue, and Ralph a young lad who escaped from Michael's clutches with the help of the Famous Five. Meanwhile Bunter, who had received warnings about the danger of thin ice, did not believe what he was told and determined to practise skating on the frozen lake in order to impress Majorie Hazeldene and the other guests when they arrived for the party. We were told that Bunter skated with the grace of an elephant or rhinoceros, but apparently he did not fall over - the ice just cracked under his weight - and it was Ralph who appeared at the opportune moment to save him. Thus began the curious friendship between Bunter and the gipsy lad, with Bunter feeling sufficiently grateful to provide him secretly with food and Bob Cherry's new overcoat, and

the gipsy looking up to Bunter as a generous benefactor. The reader was reminded that Bunter was still feeling a little benevolent after the previous series, and of course the same situation was developed at greater length in the Flip series some years later, which was really the definitive exposition of this theme.

The reader might also have recalled that the first Wharton the Rebel series had not been all that long ago, for Wharton was hit in the dark by the gipsy lad (who thought he was Michael) and was left holding Bob Cherry's overcoat in his hands. Two chapters were devoted to a quarrel between Wharton and Cherry which was smoothed over by the other members of the Famous Five, and it came to a somewhat abrupt conclusion, leaving the reader intrigued enough to wish it had been further developed, even though it was distinctly at odds with the festive atmosphere.

In the following issue there were a few more chapters at Wharton Lodge to set the scene for the Convict 99 series, but no more was heard of Marjorie Hazeldene and the party at Wharton Lodge. In later years, Charles Hamilton would never had omitted to provide some account of a promised future event.

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### TOM MERRY CAVALCADE

(Serialised from a Long-Ago C.D. Annual)

1907

The gaily-decorated tram-car slid to a halt outside the shop of Leslie Chadley, newsagent and bookseller. A lady and a small boy alighted, and, with a mellow sound from its gong, the tram was away again, moving smoothly and quietly over its new, even tracks.

Mrs. Venner clasped the child's hand, and moved towards the newsagent's shop, pausing only to stroke the sleek neck of the horse which was harnessed to a baker's cart against the kerb. The animal blinked at her over the top of the nosebag from

which it was munching contentedly, and swished its tail to disturb the flies which had been attracted to its sweating back in the warm June sunshine.

Leslie Chadley, seated behind his counter, looked over-dressed for the heat of the summer afternoon, though his Norfolk jacket was unfastened, showing the dark waistcoat which he wore underneath. A bow tie adorned the high stiff collar which encircled his neck. At thirty, Chadley had built up a prosperous little business, and he attributed much of his success to the fact

that he paid attention to his personal appearance. In Chadley's view, to have dispensed with his jacket, even with the temperature over seventy, would have been slovenly. He rose to his feet as his customers entered the shop.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Venner", he said.

The small boy, in spotless sailor suit and a straw hat which bore the insignia 'H. M. S. Dreadnought', darted over to the counter.

He announced: "We rode on the top of a new tram, Mr. Chad".

His mother smiled, and placed a gloved hand on the child's shoulder. She said:

"What a blessing the trams will be, Mr. Chadley - and how splendid they look today, all decorated for the opening of the service!"

"You're right, Mrs. Venner." Chadley glanced through the window as another flag-bedecked electric car hummed past his shop. "I hear the Mayor drove the first tram this morning. I suppose everybody will be riding now, though there is some complaint that the fare of three-farthings a mile is extortionate."

"I shall walk one way and ride the other", said Mrs. Venner, practically. "Even with  $\frac{1}{2}$ d fares for children, these things mount up."

Mr. Chadley smiled broadly, as though the idea was absurd that any of his customers should find it necessary to count their coppers.

"And what can I get for you, Mrs. Venner?"

"I don't know whether you can help me, Mr. Chadley, but Chris is beginning to read a little. I thought that perhaps you would recommend a paper which I could buy

for him regularly." She scrutinised the periodicals displayed on the counter, and added hastily: "Nothing - nothing at all which his father, if he were home, might think nasty". She shook her head, and the artificial cherries rattled on her huge hat.

"Well --" Chadley rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Some kiddies like comics - 'Chips' or 'Comic Cuts' - but I hardly think --"

"I am sure my husband would not approve of comics, Mr. Chadley."

"No?" Chadley drew a blue-covered periodical from a stack on the counter. "This is the paper my own lad loves, Mrs. Venner."

Mrs. Venner took it, scanned the cover, and read out the name: "'The Gem'. A ha'penny paper, I see." She shook her head again dubiously. "Can so cheap a production be suitable for a gentleman's son, Mr. Chadley?"

"The contents are not cheap, I can assure you, madam", said Chadley mildly.

"How old is your lad, Mr. Chadley?"

"Ronnie? He's ten."

"My Chris is not yet seven. I fear this 'Gem' would be far beyond him, Mr. Chadley."

"Maybe." Chadley smiled. "If you could spare the time, Mrs. Venner, you might read it aloud to him. You'd find that he'd be so keen on it that in next to no time he would be reading it for himself. One way to make the youngster anxious to read, madam."

"A school story, I see. Do you think the moral tone of such a story is good, Mr. Chadley?"

"Excellent! Ronnie models himself on Tom Merry, the chief character, and

I'm delighted that he does. Chris would do the same."

"Stand still, darling. Don't suck your lanyard, dear - you'll spoil your suit." Mrs. Venner eyed the Gem once more. "I see this story is entitled 'The St. Jim's Curate'. Does that sound rather like high Church, Mr. Chadley? We are strict Baptists, though it may not matter a lot."

Mr. Chadley laughed.

"A mere detail, Mrs. Venner. The stories are not religious, though they teach a fine moral code to all boys. In that tale, it just happens that a Clergyman is a splendid cricketer." Chadley turned over

the cover of the Gem, and indicated an illustration showing a handsome young man hitting out with a cricket bat.

"I'll take it, Mr. Chadley. There's your 'Gem', darling - if you like it, you shall have it every week." She opened her purse. "And a penny bar of Fry's chocolate, Mr. Chadley. Can you change half-a-sovereign?"

As Mrs. Venner left the shop, with Christopher clutching the blue-covered periodical, Chadley heard the child's voice raised shrilly: "Let's tram it home, Mummy".

(1908 Next Month)

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# News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

## MIDLAND

Only nine members attended our October meeting, but it was a very pleasant gathering.

The two special items, placed on show by Tom Porter were Nelson Lee Library No. 229 entitled "Back to the Old Home", featuring a new master, Dr. Martin whose tyranny led to a rebellion, and No. 11 of the Monster Library. Unlike the S.O.L., the Monster Library stories were not pruned at all.

We acknowledged a magnificent gift of £20 by Pat Hughes. Refreshments were provided by Joan Golen. The Lovedays offered to pay for the tea and coffee, but Joan had already seen to this. I will pay next time. The eatables, as usual, were excellent.

Tom Porter has invented a new game "Greyfriars Name Builder", which was played with much success, the winners being Geoff Lardner, the Lovedays, and Joan Golen. A discussion followed on Football and Cricket in the Hamilton schools. Hamilton was

criticised for having no sense of time. He seemed to think that four innings could be played in one day. School cricket matches are invariably one innings affairs, except the Eton and Harrow game which may cover three days.

Greyfriars Bingo was our final game, with Geoff Lardner, as usual, the winner. Geoff is doing the club a valuable service by producing our Newsletter by computer.

The next meeting will be our Christmas Party on 13th December, to which every O.B.B.C. member is invited. Good luck to all O.B.B.C. members everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

### CAMBRIDGE

We met at the home of Malcolm Pratt on 13th November, with vice-chairman Mike Rouse in charge of the meeting. A good gathering included the welcome presence of Bill Lofts.

Jack Doupe gave a masterly talk on Stevenson's "Treasure Island" and some of its sequels. He reminded us that the story ran as a serial originally in "Young Folks". Though not successful in this form, it was a sensation success in book form, not only delighting children but also adults including Mr. Gladstone.

An engrossing talk which inspired fascinating comments from Jack Overhill, Mike Rouse, Bill Thurbon, and others.

After Malcolm's magnificent tea has been enjoyed, Tony Cowley explained what he and Keith had in mind to do with respect to Neville Wood's suggestion that tape recordings should be made of club members. He played recordings made of Keith, Jack, and Adrian. These should build up into a tape library of club members.

The meeting closed with a warm vote of thanks to Malcolm for his hospitality.

### LONDON

Terry and Rosemary Beenham provided a Sexton Blake quiz that even got our three Blake scholars, Josie Packman, Horace Owen and Ann Clarke, guessing and it was the latter who proved a

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winner and was awarded the first prize. This quiz took place at the meeting of the club at Walthamstow where a very good attendance had an enjoyable time.

Young Duncan Harper read the Memory Lane extract from a newsletter of July 1966.

Alan Stewart, making the journey with Myra from Burnham on Crouch won the Anagram quiz that Roy Parsons conducted.

Tommy Keen read a Gem chapter that featured Ernest Levison.

Mary Cadogan played over a tape of the time she appeared on the John Dunn show which featured the re-issue of the four William books.

For her good work on the recent successful Ealing luncheon party, Thelma Bradford was presented with a bouquet of flowers.

Next meeting will be the Yuletide one at the Ealing home of Bill and Thelma Bradford on Sunday, 11th December. A full tea will be provided. Kindly advise if intending to be present.

BEN WHITER

### NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 12th November, 1983

Ten members were present on the occasion of our new venue gathering. It was good to see Molly back with us, after her holiday in Australia.

A copy of C.D. number 40 of 1950 was on show - the item being of interest a newspaper article shown on the back page, concerning the formation of a Leeds "Billy Bunter Club"! Surprise was shown by some members, that our section had been in existence for over thirty years, meeting every second Saturday in the month since its formation.

All members present liked our new accommodation: its atmosphere very conducive to our meeting. The cost for hiring the room was higher than we had paid in the past so it would appear that yearly membership fees will have to be increased, in the near future. Quite a long discussion followed on the form our

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Christmas party should take.

Joe Wood gave a talk on the Egypt series in "The Magnet". Giving a quick "run down" of events in each issue in the series, Joe remarked how Frank Richards was expert at creating atmosphere. One can really believe in the characters he created in the Egypt series - and enjoy the humour, action and suspense. A very enjoyable talk, much appreciated.

Harry Barlow had prepared an article which was to prompt a debate on "Frank Richards Versus The "Subs" " - a part of the programme that had been anxiously awaited by all present. However, we had been compelled to spend a large part of our early proceedings talking about the future of our Club, so time was running out and this item had to be left for a future meeting.

Our next gathering, will be Saturday, 10th December, 1983 - our Christmas Party to which all friends are invited. We commence at 4.30 p.m. and will finish by 9.30 p.m. Please note our new venue: CITY OF LEEDS ROOM, Leeds Parish Church, City Centre, Leeds, 2.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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# The Postman Called

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

BILL LOFTS (London): I was interested in Bill Thurbon's article in the November Blakiana. The S.B.L. No. 19 'The Sniper' was written by 'Richard Williams' (not Robert) a name that was used by several writers in the Sexton Blake field. In this case it hid the identity of Stephen Francis - who was quite famous as the writer 'Hank Janson', whose paper-backs about a Chicago crime reporter sold millions of copies from the forties onwards. I met him several times down Fleet Street, a slightly built medium height man, smartly dressed with well groomed grey hair. He lives in Spain.

J. Louis Smythe was a really brilliant artist, of whom I'm always seeking further biographic facts. One of the best drawings he ever did was of a fire-engine crashing through a plate glass

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window of a shop. The impact and impression it made on readers was enormous

MRS. MARY CADOGAN (Beckenham): I loved the October issue of C.D. Amongst other good things, the Wakefield cover was superb. Tommy Keen's article on Hamiltonian names was interesting, especially what he said about the rather obscure but nicely named Greyfriars character Richard Hillary. There was, of course, a real-life Richard Hillary, long after Hamilton's creation. In the Second World War, Richard Hillary was a Battle of Britain pilot, who, shot down and severely wounded, recovered, went back into action, and was killed at the age of 23. He left a moving record of his experiences for posterity in a book named "The Last Enemy" which can still be picked up second-hand and is well worth reading.

LEN WORMULL (Romford): I especially enjoy the Let's Be Controversial articles - they deserve a publication of their own. These and Danny's Diary are my two favourite features. I particularly enjoyed the recent article by James Hodge - "Was Charles Hamilton a Substitute?" Good stuff!

GORDON HUDSON (Ouston): Each time I read the Collectors' Digest I find there is something topical, at least for me, which I feel I would like to comment on, although sometimes it loses its point if it is not done immediately.

One item in particular was the article on John Newton Chance in the September issue. When I received the C.D. I had just finished reading one of his modern novels, 'The Hunting of Mr. Exe', which I returned to the library the following day. This particular story has as its investigator Jonathan Blake, who appeared in several other books. I have often wondered whether Chance based him on Sexton Blake, although I do not think any of the Jonathan Blakes I have read were as good as his Sexton Blake stories. The latter were certainly good thrillers and I feel some of them at least would make good films.

I have noticed that in quite a few issues you have mentioned T. B. Reed's stories, particularly 'My Friend Smith'.

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I suppose it must be about six or seven years ago that I read and enjoyed it thoroughly. Early last year I also read another Reed book, 'The Willoughby Captains', which again was a fine story. Besides 'The Fifth Form at St. Dominics' which I read many years ago I also have at least three other books, including 'The 3-Guinea Watch', which I must get round to sometime.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: "The Adventures of a Three Guinea Watch" was Reed's first long story, and was one of his best. Full of coincidence, it is extremely entertaining from the first word to the last.)

H. HEATH (Windsor): I was very interested to read Len Hawley's article in October concerning "The Mystery of a Hansom Cab" and "A Fifth Form Mystery".

I realise that the style of Fergus Hume in "The Mystery of a Hansom Cab" would not be to everybody's liking. However, I am grateful to Mr. Hawley for his comments, and for the information given about the author.

"A Fifth Form Mystery" by Harold Avery is a particular favourite of mine. I first read it in a B.O.P. Annual over forty years ago.

I agree that the story is well written, characterised and easily readable. It is also agreed that there is little action or excitement. What then is the attraction to me with this story? The plot is a very basic one. A Japanese vase containing a £5 note, disappears from the School museum. Suspicion falls upon the central character, a Fifth Former named Hamble, who is a well-drawn character. The big attraction is that the title is no misnomer. Mystery runs throughout the pages, and as far as I am concerned, the identity of the culprit is not revealed until near the end.

In my favourite Magnet series, "The Courtfield Cracksman" the identity of this character is no secret to the reader. In fact, I have not read any story by Frank Richards that was a true mystery. Martin Clifford I think did much better with this theme - the "Rogue Rackstraw" series from the "Gem" of 1922 is a splendid example of atmosphere and mystery creation. In my opinion, the "Sussex Man" series by Charles Hamilton in the "Modern Boy" surpassed anything I have read in the "Magnet" for mystery.

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Yes, "A Fifth Form Mystery" is rather special to me.

Thank you Mr. Hawley for your views on the two stories.

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## FANTASY AT CHRISTMAS

by Esmond Kadish

No writer in the Old Papers could, I think, capture the special magic of the fantasy-land of Christmas, with its holly-and-mistletoe-decorated baronial hall and convivial atmosphere, more completely than John Wheway. As most people are probably aware, Mr. Wheway took over the Cliff House stories in the "Schoolgirl", in the spring of 1932, using the familiar pen-name of "Hilda Richards".

His first three Christmas series, written in 1932, '33, and '34, with the Cliff House girls spending memorable holidays at Luscor Hall, Christmas Castle, and Robin's Roost, respectively, created just the right blend of seasonable merrymaking, mystery, and adventure, and are still delightful to read.

He was equally successful in creating interesting settings in which to place his characters. Following their stay at Robin's Roost - an inn which had once been a highwaymen's lair - John Wheway has his nine Cliff House girls, and three lads from Friardale Boys' School, (Greyfriars - alas! was not permitted in the "Schoolgirl") journeying up to a snowbound destination on the Yorkshire Moors. This is Delma Castle, the "ancestral home" of the monocled Jemima Carstairs, and her "guv'nor", Colonel Carstairs. After reaching Huddersfield, the girls and boys change to a local train which becomes snowbound at the "lonely little country station of Moorland". The porter informs the party that there's no local hotel or inn in which to stay the night:- "'There's nobbut Pig and Trough down't road, an' that's to'local ale-house. An'like to be closed by now', he added resentfully." Hardly suitable accommodation for your young ladies, of course, and, as the expected escort from Delma Castle has failed to turn up, Barbara Redfern and Co., and the boys, commence the eight-mile trek through the driving blizzard, with the snow-laden moor

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stretching in "eye-aching endlessness" before them.

Just the right mixture of mystery and menace to start such a series! The plot, in fact, is a sort of "Lorna Doone" situation transferred to a "Wuthering Heights" setting. The chums encounter a girl, Mary Steffins, lying unconscious in an abandoned moorland hut, in which they, themselves, take refuge. Mary is the innocent victim of a feud existing between the Faas - a tribe of wild moorland gypsies - and Mary's father, General Steffins, an old comrade of Colonel Carstairs. On her way to join the Colonel at Delma Castle, Mary has been captured by the gypsies and kept prisoner. She refuses to write a letter intended to entrap her father, and is beaten and otherwise ill-treated. Having escaped from the Faas, Mary is befriended by the Cliff House party, who take her to the Castle. When the girls and boys refuse to surrender her to the tender mercies of Mother Faa, the ancient crone who is the "brains" of the tribe, the castle is besieged by the gypsies. A spirited defence is organised by Clara Trevlyn, using giant snowballs and icy water from hoses, and an initial attack is warded off successfully - if not, perhaps, quite credibly. Eventually, however, the castle is taken by the gypsies, led by Mother Faa's unprepossessing offspring, Black Jake, and Mary is recaptured.

Of course, all comes right in the end, but not before as many of the Cliff House characters as possible have played their part. Poor Bessie is captured by Mother Faa, at one point, and lowered by rope from an upstairs window into the arms of Black Jake; Mabel Lynn impersonates Mother Faa on another occasion, and the boys mount an unsuccessful expedition across the snowy wastes to bring rescue to the besieged defenders. Help does finally arrive in the form of R.A.F. aircraft and General Steffins, and the gypsies are scattered.

In addition to the Cliff House girls, there are two colourful characters created by Mr. Wheway:- Mother Faa, herself, and M'Lizi, the gypsy queen, possessed of "a pair of bead-like eyes", and a "great hooked nose, strongly reminiscent of the beak of some carrion bird", is elsewhere described as a "dreadful old hag". Even her son, Black Jake, has a healthy respect for her, as she

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hobbles around with her stick "lashing the dust out of some poor unfortunate's clothes", and screeching jolly little ditties, such as:- "--- for t'fight is on, an' the blood shall stir, when ye gets to grips wi' the Gorgio cur!" Not exactly full of the milk of human kindness! M'Lizi, on the other hand, is fiercely loyal to Colonel Carstairs and the Cliff House chums. Late of the "Ingombi tribe", she is an acquisition from the previous summer's holiday in Africa, and may best be described by saying that if Edwy Searles Brook's character, Umlosi, had had a daughter, she would have been just like M'Lizi:- "M'Lizi likes not the little white spirits which fall from the skies. Nor does she like this darkness, which is surely Umtagati". She takes a gleeful delight in the hostilities, and threatens to throw Mother Faa "from the top of the kraal", when she takes her as prisoner to the castle. A pity that, later in the 'thirties, Mr. Wheway decided to jettison her in favour of a rather "comic-book" character, "Jungle Jess", who seemed to be a cross between a junior female Tarzan and Dorothy Lamour in her "Jungle Princess" films.

Altogether, "The Siege of Delma Castle" is great fun, packed with action and humour. It's as good an adventure story as I've read in any of the boys' papers - and better than many! - and anyone who still entertains the lingering suspicion that the girls' stories are all right in their way, but a bit "tame", should dip into this one.

If - and it's a big "if" - you can find a copy!

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A COMBINATION

by R. J. Godsave

The Success of any weekly school-story paper must be regulated by its circulation, or in other words its loyal band of readers. A very important part played by any successful paper is its continuity which in itself contributes so very much in keeping the interest of readers.

After the 1914-18 war when paper and other shortages were returning to normal, the weekly papers which are so favoured by the Club were very much a way of life for the average schoolboy

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and schoolgirl reader. In the early 1920's with radio in its infancy and television not thought of, the weekly paper figured largely in reading material, exchange and collecting.

The fact that large numbers, together with full sets of our favourite papers, survived so many years after publication, in many cases in extremely good condition, shows that there was something more than just the loyalty of readers for this remarkable state of affairs.

It could be that a combination of high quality illustrations together with the skill of the author could bring a character almost to life. However much an author may describe his characters in words, he is so very much dependent on the illustrations to provide the reader

with an overall description and prevent confusion in the mind.

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WANTED: Sexton Blake Library 2nd series: 3, 20, 53, 57, 76, 101, 143, 151, 201, 214, 221, 266, 281, 316, 433, 435. Union Jacks before 1918.  
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