

STORY PAPER
Collectors'
Digest

JUNE 1985

Vol 39

No 462



52P

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SO LONG IN THE TOOTH!

A vast acculation of years, (in contrast to a vast accumulation of old boys' books), means that, from time to time, one feels old and pathetic. Many of us in a similar boat might like to improve our position, but few of us, surely, would wish to change it entirely. For instance, I should hate to be a youngster today. For an accumulation of years means an accumulation of memories.

I am glad that I can remember the silent films, accompanied by the tip-top and hard-working orchestras which the majority of silent cinemas had. Dozens of the lovely old tunes which those orchestras played remain in my memories - the Archibald Joyce

waltzes, the Ketelby marches, and sad pieces like "Heartease" and "Hearts & Flowers" to mention but a few.

As a lad I was deeply in love with a young lady named Florrie Vincent who played the piano in the band of a Gravesend cinema. A year or two ago I wrote an article for the Gravesend Reporter on the silent cinemas and I mentioned my secret love for the fair Florrie. The following week, to my surprise, a photograph of Florrie's brother appeared on the front page of the paper. My little article had roused many memories in her family. Shortly after, I received a letter from Florrie's niece who sent me a photograph of her aunt. Florrie had married a dance band leader eventually, and both she and her husband had been active workers among scout troops in the district.

"How Florrie would have delighted in your article!" wrote the niece to me. Alas, when the article appeared, Florrie had been dead for several years. Now, every Christmas, I receive a card from the niece. She signs it, and adds the words: "Florrie Vincent's niece".

I'm glad that I can remember the Keystone two-reel comedies. In all the tumbling years since, I have never laughed so much - and laughing is good for you. In those Keystones I recall an angular, sharp-featured, middle-aged lady (her pie-bespattered dignity was the source of much fun), rather on the lines of Flora Finch who appeared with John Bunny in early domestic comedies. I wonder whether, among the very few remaining who can recall the Keystones, there is anyone who recalls that angular, sour female. I have an idea that her name was Rosemary Theby, but I couldn't be sure of even that.

I love to remember the Lyons' tea-shops, where one could get a steak and kidney pudding for a bob followed by a banana split for ninepence. I love to remember the trams and buses, when you only had to wait a minute or two for one to be along, and there was no queueing in the rain to get aboard, for every car or bus carried a conductor.

I have joy in remembering the two bob (or much less) paperbacks which one could read with pleasurable convenience, so different from the highly-priced variety, which are so sparsely-cut that trying to read them in bed is a nightmare, like we have now.

I remember the pink Pearson's, the orange "Answers", and the blue "Tit-Bits". Nothing like them now, alas.

I remember my first Gem, the blue covered "D'Arcy's Libel Action" which my sister read to her wee brother. Not to mention "The Limit", the blue-covered precious stone in which the Fourth had a temporary form-mistress named Miss Ponsonby, who, used to a class of girls, insisted on calling all the St. Jim's Fourth by their Christian names. I remember the frustrations as a long glut of sub stories descended on the Gem and the Magnet, and the pleasure in that Stonehenge of the year, the Dirk Power series (which Roger Jenkins discussed so brilliantly last month) which shone beyond its merits because real Clifford tales were so rare.

If you remember the series appearing you just recall the joy that the real writer was back at last. If you came along later, you view it merely on its own merits. Which is the difference in the old and the young viewpoint.

I'm glad that I knew the Music Halls which have long disappeared. And the great comediennes (what has become of the breed?) like Lily Morris singing "Don't Have Any More, Mrs. Moore!" and Elsie Carlisle singing "No! No! A Thousand Times No!", and, of course, Revnell and West in their Girl Guide sketch.

I'm glad that I can remember the Maypole, and the Home & Colonial. And the time when all songs had real melodies and were not just an infernal racket. I'm glad that I can remember cricket before the tycoons took it over and turned it into third-rate musical comedy. (The music being provided by beer-cans.)

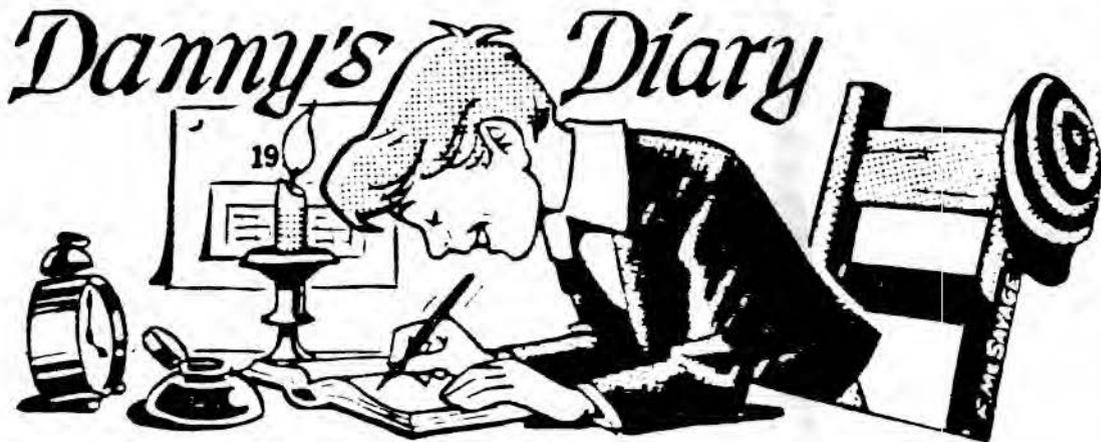
I'm glad that I can remember the Penny Popular which later became the Popular, one of my favourite papers.

Is there anything you are glad that you can remember? Of course, you'll be giving your age away. I can even remember Mr. Drage, who laid your lino quite free, and Dreamy Daniel who had a dog named Born Tired. And Beatrice Buttercup and Waddles the Waiter. Did someone lift a chunk of slang from St. Jim's and shout "Can it!" Thanks!! I will!

THE EDITOR

SEXTON BLAKE enthusiast for many years only just now starting to build a collection wishes to purchase Sexton Blake Library books of the 1st and 2nd series. Must be in good condition.

TERRY BEENHAM, 35 ESK WAY, RISE PARK, ROMFORD, ESSEX, RM1 4YH. (Telephone Romford 66378 - evenings.)



JUNE 1985

The School for Slackers is back with a new series in Modern Boy. I enjoy each separate story very much though there is a bit of a sameness about them, taken as a series.

There is a new series of motor-cycle racing stories by Kaye Campson. The first Captain Justice tale this month is "Peril From the Air", with a threat of destruction hanging over Britain. The Biggles tale is "Marooned by Biggles" with Biggles putting a stop to the activities of a dangerous passenger.

The next week saw the story being told of a big new film: "Lives of a Bengal Lancer". The Capt. Justice tale is "Doom of the Flying Cloud" in which the enemies strike hard. The Biggles tale is "Tricksters of the Red Sea", with Biggles outwitting a Sheik this week.

Then, in the third week, the School for Slackers is back. First tale of the new series is "The Dandy Painter" with Aubrey Compton sloshing paint about in the live-wire Head's study. Not much of a Head, really, if he can't manage his boys better. "Captain Justice on the Run" has an entire Central European State declaring war on the Captain. He has an army of four. The Biggles tale is "The Plane Wreckers". Airline pilots and their valuable cargoes crashed to their deaths and it took Biggles and Two White Mice to solve the mystery.

In the fourth week "The Mountain of Light" is the Biggles yarn, with an S.O.S. broadcast from the B.B.C. landing Biggles in a weird mystery. The High Coombe tale is "Too Tired for Cricket", with the live-wire Head setting about waking up the school at sport as well as in classes. And about as successfully. Good fun, all the same. The Justice tale is "Peril of Titanic Power". Six cruisers are on their way to blow Justice's giant Tower to bits.

In the final week of June the Biggles tale is "The Mountain of Light", continuing the tale about the B.B.C. broadcast, "Captain Justice Cornered" carries on about the Titanic Tower. "What Price Duck's Eggs!" has the School for Slackers in the most amazing cricket match ever played.

The Tests with South Africa, under their captain, Wade, are going strong. The first match, at Nottingham, was drawn. In the second match, played at Lord's, the Springboks won by 157 runs. So England has got to pull their socks up.

There has been a terrible railway accident at Welwyn Garden City on the London & North Eastern Railway. Three expresses left Kings Cross for the north, within a comparatively few minutes of each other. Due to a signalman's error, though the line was protected by all the latest safety devices, the second train was slowed down as the signalman thought it was catching up on the first train. The third train ran at 70 mph into the rear of the second train. 14 people were killed and nearly a hundred were injured. It happened near midnight on the 15th of the month.

It has been a great Wimbledon fortnight. In the Men's singles Fred Perry of Britain beat Von Cram of Germany. The Ladies' singles was an all-American affair, and Mrs. Moody beat Miss Jacobs.

The Aga Khan's horse "Bahram" has won the Derby.

A truly great month in the Gem. Every story a gem. First of the month is "From Fourth-Former to Grocer's Boy". Lumley-Lumley has fallen out with his millionaire father, who disowns him. So Lumley has to leave St. Jim's, and he throws in his lot with Grimes, the grocer's boy. A great tale, and very original.

Next week, "Playing the Game". A new cricket coach, a Mr. Fitzgerald, comes to St. Jim's, but Mr. Selby recognises him as Dandy Jim, an expert safe-breaker. Nobody believes Mr. Selby, but Levison gets locked in the Head's safe, and Mr. Fitzgerald gives himself away when he uses his safe-breaking gifts to save Levison's life. A lovely tale.

Next, "The Schemer of St. Jim's". Tom Merry appears to

be chumming up with Crooke, but Crooke is blackmailing Tom who is trying to save his chum Lowther from a betrayal. Then "An Affair of Honour", a remarkable and unusual tale about Kildare challenging the captain of a rival school to a fight - and the affair ends in the police court.

Finally, a real scream. Mr. Lathom has to be away from St. Jim's for a time, and a lady, Miss Ponsonby, who has been used to teaching sweet little girls, is put in charge of the Fourth. A marvellous month in the Gem from start to finish. This one is entitled "Miss Ponsonby's Pets". A marvellous month in the Gem.

The St. Frank's serial and the Packsaddle series have also continued all the month in the Gem.

The famous judge, Mr. Justice Avory, has died. He was a judge to many famous trials. One of his most spectacular was when a Russian Prince took action against the film company M.G.M. on account of the film "Rasputin". A record sum in libel damages was paid to Prince and Princess Youssapoff who were played by John and Ethel Barrymore in the film. It doesn't look as though the picture will ever be released now.

We had a day in London during the month. Dad and Douglas went to the St. Martin's Theatre and saw a new play "The Two Mrs. Carrrolls" and Mum and I went to Holborn Empire where we saw a lovely variety bill which included Syd Seymour and his Mad Hatters Band; Sid Field, a po-faced comedian who was in a sketch in which he was being taught to play golf; Billy Danvers, the comedian; and a delightful stylish pair named Jane Ayr and Eddie Leslie. He calls her chromium-plated Fanny.

A rather mixed bag at the local cinemas this month. A pretty good film is "Wings in the Dark", starring Cary Grant and Myrna Loy in which a flier is bitter from being blinded in an accident, but he manages to sort things out and go to the rescue of his girl friend. "In Town To-night" is a British picture starring Jack Buchanan and based on a wireless variety show. "Mississippi" starring Joan Bennett, W. C. Fields, and Bing Crosby, is about a singer on a showboat.

James Cagney is just terrific in "White Heat" about a vicious gangster who is a mother's boy. It is fearfully violent, fearfully gruesome, and I loved every minute of it. At the end he blows himself up on a gasometer.

Ronald Colman and Loretta Young in "Clive of India" has been much cracked up, but I found it very tame. With this one there

was Mickey Mouse in "Man Friday". A light British comedy was Tom Walls and Ralph Lynn in "Fighting Stock". A bit tame was Clark Gable and Joan Crawford in "Chained" about a married man who forgets his wife when he meets a nice girl on a sea cruise.

Elizabeth Bergner in "Escape me Never" was not really a picture for manly lads like me. Too sad and sugary, but the ladies love it. With this one was a Mickey Mouse called "Service Station".

The French liner "Normandie" has broken the record, doing the Atlantic crossing in 107½ hours, at an average speed of 29 knots.

The King marked his 70th birthday by attending the Trooping of the Colour, but soon after he has gone down with bronchitis and has been advised to have two weeks rest.

A good month in the monthlies. A barring-our story in the Schoolboys' Own Library against a new Headmaster - a Dutchman named Mr. Brawder. This one is entitled "Down With the Tyrant". The St. Jim's S.O.L. is "The Secret of Lone Pine" which continues the adventures of Tom Merry & Co. at Wildrake's home in British Columbia. Both these S.O.L.s are absolutely tip-top.

In the Boys' Friend Library I had "The Million Dollar Island" which was a series in Modern Boy not long ago, about an island made of pink coral and a mysterious Mr. Jam.

A superb novel in the S.B.L. is "The Secret of the Gold Locket" by Pierre Quiroule. A city man finds a locket which he believes is the clue to a murder, so he approaches Sexton Blake. A lovely tale, set partly in Brazil. Another good S.B.L. this month is "The Cottage of Terror" by Donald Stuart.

The mighty Magnet has been mightier and more magnetic than ever this month. The series has continued about Ralph Stacey, who is Harry Wharton's double, and it is top-notch.

First tale of the month is "Harry Wharton's Enemy". In view of the great service Wharton's uncle has done him, the new boy should be Wharton's friend, but he is actually Wharton's biggest enemy. Stacey sucks up to Mr. Quelch, and the master tends to favour Stacey and look dubiously at Wharton.

Next comes "The Hero of the Hour". At the end of this tale Wharton resigns the captaincy and says he's going to cut cricket this term. Then came "Who Shall be Captain?" which came out on a Friday on account of the Whitsun holiday. In this one, Mr. Quelch suspects Wharton of going to the Three Fishers pub. And Mr. Quelch is made to look a fool.

Then came "Harry Wharton's Triumph", a truly great story.

The former captain can hold his own when it comes to playing cricket. Final of the month is "The Black Sheep", when Stacey shows himself to be not only a jealous and spiteful fellow, but also a rake. This wonderful series continues next month.

Everybody loves to wear a rose on Alexandra Rose Day. This year the sale of Alexandra Roses brought in £42,000 for the London hospitals, in memory of Queen Alexandra.

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NOTES ON DANNY'S DIARY FOR JUNE 1935

S.O.L. No. 245 "Down With the Tyrant" comprised the first three stories of the Magnet's 6-story Brander Rebellion series of 1930. It was a series of restrained length, and fitted snugly into two issues of the S.O.L.

S.O.L. No. 246 "The Secret of Lone Pine" comprised three stories of the 8-story Wild West series of the Gem of the summer of 1927. The final story of the series (merely a makeweight story) was omitted, though a few closing lines were lifted from it to wind up the S.O.L. In this case, too, we had two excellent specimens of the S.O.L.

The Sexton Blake story "The Secret of the Gold Locket" had previously appeared in the S.B.L. under the title "The Secret of Thirty Years" in the Spring of 1925. (The Sexton Blake Catalogue states incorrectly that the previously title of the story had been "The Case of the Kidnapped Legatee" which was actually a different story entirely".

In the Gem "The New House Rivals" had the same title in the early summer of 1912. "From Fourth-Former to Grocer's Boy" had been "Shunned by his Father" in the following week in 1912. "Playing the Game" had been "Facing the Music" the next week in 1912. "The Schemer of St. Jim's" had been "The Whip Hand" the next week in 1912. "An Affair of Honour" had been "An Affair of Dishonour" the following week in 1912. "Miss Ponsonby's Pets" had been "The Limit" (a glorious bit of fun) the following week in 1912.

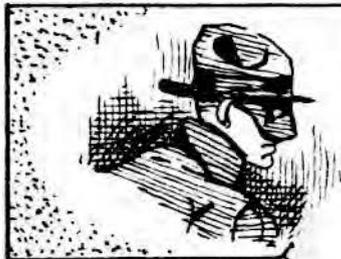
It was very, very unfortunate that the Gem at this time in 1935 was carrying a heavy supporting programme, entailing cutting of some of the finest stories of the blue cover era.

So far as I can recall, the film "Rasputin" was never released in this country, following the libel action won by Prince Youssapoff and his wife against M.G.M. Reports on the case were front page news in the papers in 1935.

* * * * *

WANTED: SGOLs by Pauline Stewart (Reg. Kirkham). Nos. 158 - A Schoolgirl's Second Chance; 212 - Her Schooling Meant so Much; 241 - Her Brothers were Different; 304 - The School She Couldn't Dislike.

RAY HOPKINS, 18 FOXHUNTER DRIVE, OADBY, LEICS., LE2 5FE.



BLAKIANA



FORTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKE (Part Two)

Salisbury Square, just off Fleet Street, was where Edward Lloyd the Publisher of Penny Bloods - the forerunner of Old Boys' Books - had his offices in early Victorian times. In that same square over a hundred years later, in a pub called 'The Cogers' was where I used to meet not only Howard Baker regularly for years on a Friday evening. But a host of other editors, writers, and artists too.

Whilst waiting for others to turn up (usually it was Jack Trevor Story who was late!) we used to pass the time by mentally trying to name all the 30 odd boys who were reputed to still be in the Remove at Greyfriars at the end of The Magnet in 1940. Then say argue in the case of Alonzo Todd (Bill Baker's favourite comical character) whether he had actually left the school or not, or was just absent being ill.

Apart from the amusing Jack Trevor Story, I used to see Wilfred MacNeilly adorned nearly always in a black beret. Arthur Kent who worked at the nearby Daily Express and only had one arm. Arthur McClean (real name George Mann) Rex Dolphin, Martin Thomas, Stephen Frances (of 'Hank Janson' fame) Philip Chambers, and so many others including Mike Moorcock an assistant on the S.B.L. and now world famous for his weird stories.

Non-Blake personalities included Basil Reynolds - whom I still visit today - who introduced me to Ernest McKeag - a most prolific writer of boys and girls stories under so many different pen-names, 'Mac' as he was affectionately known was editor once on The School-Friend, having a wealth of stories to tell about contributors in the good old days. He even wrote the 'Come Into the Office Boys' and Girls' feature in The Magnet. 'Mac' died in 1974 greatly missed by all his friends. In turn I was introduced to so many old editors and contributors at Amalgamated Press. The then mysterious Blake writer 'Martin Frazer' who turned out to be Percy A. Clarke former

editor of The Boys' Friend Library. A very large man Percy had written boys stories under a large number of pen-names still being discovered.

Looking round the tables on a Friday night in the Cogers was often like being at some celebrity event. Sitting usually on a stool at another bar was Stewart Pride, brother-in-law of John Nix Pentelow who married his sister some thirty years younger. It is not generally known that Pentelow, the First World War Magnet and Gem editor, wrote some excellent Sexton Blake stories in both the S.B.L. and Union Jack. Then there was the tall poker-faced Stanton Hope usually surrounded by a group of friends from the nearby Press Club. Another man who interested me a great deal was the original 'Happy Eddie' from my favourite comic Film Fun. Usually all alone, dressed in a sober charcoal suit, with a most miserable expression on his face he was totally unlike the so happy editor I imaged.

All good things unfortunately come to an end. Although the 'new look' Sexton Blake Library had increased sales rising all the time, when the Daily Mirror took over Fleetway Publications they deemed that with their high circulations policy the Library had to die. It was in that same pub that we had the 'Farewell Sexton Blake Party' that included Eric Parker probably the most famous artist of the whole saga.

* * * * *

THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S CORNER

I found a charming mouse in the fields at the back. I called it Hector. I played with it for a while, and then took it home. I took it through my cat door. Just my luck! There was the Editor standing in the hall instead of getting on with his work. You ought to have seen the palaver. He screeched "Oooh, Snowee -- no-o-o". He rushed round shutting the doors off the hall. A nuisance that, for I should have liked to take Hector into the sitting room where it could hide behind the furniture while I hunted him. We both rushed around after Hector in the hall, and I got him at last.

That Ed took him off me. Dropped a handkerchief over him and picked him up. He took Hector down the road to a stretch of grass - I watched them go - and then the Ed let Hector scamper away through the long grass.

The Ed said: "Don't you get going down there to look for him, Snowee". I'd watch it. As if I would. Me, with my back!



A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by an Old Boy

It is not very often St. Frank's has a visit by an intruder, but it happened. Nelson Lee's study was burgled recently by, it turned out, an old recidivist who kindly left his fingerprints. Entering Mr. Lee's study at any time is a dangerous thing to do - he should have known better.

When the story was circulated around the school Nipper was asked about the origin of the fingerprint system and thus adjured explained that it had its origin in India for many years although before the Chinese used it. A Sir Edward Henry brought it with him on leaving India to take up a post in England in 1900. But he struggled for a time convincing the doubters at Scotland Yard, but by 1905 the eagerly awaited chance came when the system was proved.

Handforth maintained it was the Bertillon system that owed the origin of fingerprinting, but Nipper explained that system which was named after the French criminologist of the same name, invented a system of identification of criminals by careful measurements of certain parts of the body which do not change after full growth.

* * * * *

In a large school like St. Frank's there are several "worlds". There's the world of the domestics; the world of the masters; that of the seniors and the juniors, and of the young Third Formers. A new boy can undergo a trauma from his sudden, strange surroundings. For the purposes of this letter I asked John Busterfield Boots of the Remove what were his feelings on arriving at St. Frank's.

Boots is a very forthright junior and wasn't at all reluctant to describe the first week. He very nearly ran away. He described a visit to Bannington on a wet Sunday afternoon; he had friends who had come to St. Frank's with him from another school, but

on that Sunday he just wanted to be alone and walked to Bannington. There, on the wet deserted streets, it was touch and go whether he returned to St. Frank's or went back home.

Boots is a strange mixture of character. He decided to stay on and become captain of the Lower School. He would fiercely create a new image and gather round him and suborn fellows who were willing to do his bidding.

But when he instilled a gambling den he went too far. In his fight for the captaincy and usurp Nipper he had an uphill challenge on his hands. Boots' reign didn't last long. His dictatorial methods was never meant to last.

But Buster Boots is a very different junior now. Like many before him found that being dictator never pays.

I have stated that there is a world in which schoolmasters live. This is the world that exists in Masters' Common Room. Where the form rooms are left behind and the current news, weather and gossip prevail.

It is in such atmosphere that the real world of school life predominates. Where age has left yesterday's boys for more important sights. But only temporarily.

The next day, back in the form rooms, masters retreat into the world of juniors and seniors, and if there are moments of nostalgia, these are quickly forgotten in the often heady situations that occur in any classroom.

SCHOOLBOY SLANG

writes E. Baldock

I have just read 'A letter from St. Frank's' by 'An Old Boy' in the April issue of Collectors' Digest and was most interested in his collection of, and remarks referring to, schoolboy vocabularies and exclamations. There is little doubt that most of those quoted have their origins at some point early in time and literature - strangely as this may at first appear considering the uncouth nature of most of them. Yet 'Go and eat coke' seems to have a very exalted ancestry. I fully share the revulsion of 'An Old Boy' at being requested to 'Go and eat coke', few experiences I imagine could be more unpleasant. Yet this inelegant phrase, one is almost sorry to have to record, has its source in none other than one of William Shakespeare's plays - Julius Caesar no less.

I have in my possession a curious but extremely useful little volume published some forty years ago by John Crowther entitled

'Encyclopaedia of Phrases and Origins' by Edwin Radford. Under the entry 'Go and chew coke' it is stated as being a retort or a reproach to a person who has caused offence... one of the best known of Shakespeare's 'exclamations'. It is a corruption of Caesar's words of reproach to Brutus: 'Tu quoque, Brute' - 'And thou, too, Brutus' This occurs in Act III. From 'chew' to 'eat' is but a small step. So it would appear we are in irreproachable company when we are requested or adjure a companion to 'Go and eat coke' - unpleasant though it may be!

Incidentally Radford's little compendium was published at Margate, not a hundred miles from traditional Greyfriars' country. Could he, one wonders, have been aware of the relevance?

Another interesting exclamation which, although not mentioned by 'An Old Boy', was in fairly constant use when I was at school is: 'By Jiminy'. This would appear to be a contraction of 'Jesu Domine' - 'Jesus, Master'. Strange and tortuous must have been the paths down which many of these exclamations have come to us.

WOMEN SHALL WEEP

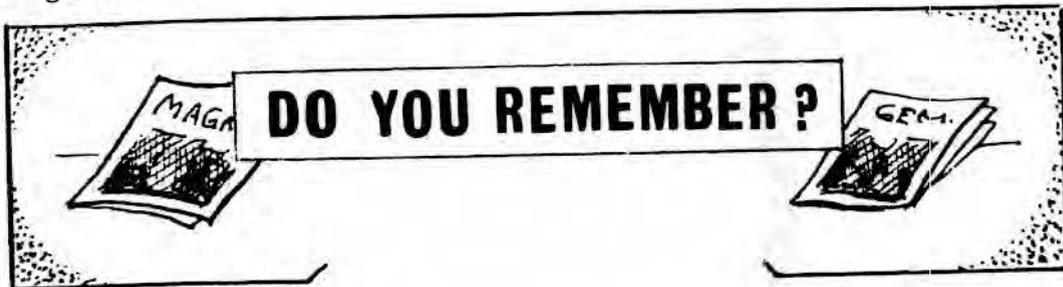
comments ESMOND KADISH

I see that Old Boy of St. Frank's, in referring to the Moor View School, supports the suggestion that girls are more "complex" than boys and "greater individuals". Maybe so - or is it, perhaps, that boys are expected - and trained - to bottle up their feelings more than girls, and not "to wear their hearts on their sleeves"? I can recall E. S. Brooks reproving a girl-reader of the NELSON LEE, in the late twenties, who had written in to complain that he had made one of his Moor View characters burst into tears in one of his tales. This was, apparently, not to the liking of this emancipated young lady! Brooks replied in effect, that he didn't see why the "modern" girl of the twenties should feel that it was degrading to show honest emotion!

FOR SALE: School Friends 1950; Girls' Crystal. 50p each. S.A.E. J. COOK, 178 MARIA ST., BENWELL, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, NE4 8LL.

FOR SALE: Original Boys' Own Papers 1936 - 1942. Excellent condition. Lists available on request.

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No. 204 - Magnets 906-9 - Ragged Dick Series

by Roger M. Jenkins

Charles Hamilton was rather disparaging about Sir Walter Scott, alleging that his characterisation was poor and that the people in his novels were merely walking suits of clothes. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that one aspect of Scott's work was eagerly seized upon by Hamilton - the theme of the missing heir or long-lost relative, either kidnapped by gypsies as a baby or fallen on hard times and reduced to tramping the roads. The Magnet made use of this type of theme again and again, often with some rather unbelievable explanations, plus of course the long arm of co-incidence that brought the missing heir into close contact with his real family. The Ragged Dick series exemplifies all the best and worst aspects of the theme.

The Famous Five encountered Ragged Dick when he was being unmercifully thrashed by Pedlar Parker - for refusing to steal chickens, as it later transpired. When they were dealing with the Pedlar, Dick made his escape into Sir Henry Compton's park. Sir Henry, having just received a telegram that his grandson Richard had died, fell down in some kind of seizure, from which Dick assisted him. The following day the stern baronet astonished Dick by informing him that he would adopt him as his grandson and send him to Greyfriars, but the adoption was to be a secret between them. Fortunately, Dick had once fallen in with a drunken Master of Arts who was also tramping the roads, and from him Dick had acquired a knowledge of languages enough for him to take his place at a public school.

The third person in the missing heir stories was often a dissolute relative who hoped to inherit the entailed estate in order to pay off his debts. The rake in this story was Sir Henry's cousin Roger, who had borrowed extensively from moneylenders, on the assurance

that only a sickly boy (living abroad) stood between him and his eventual inheritance. The appearance of a healthy grandson at Greyfriars completely upset all these calculations and caused Roger to react with some vigour.

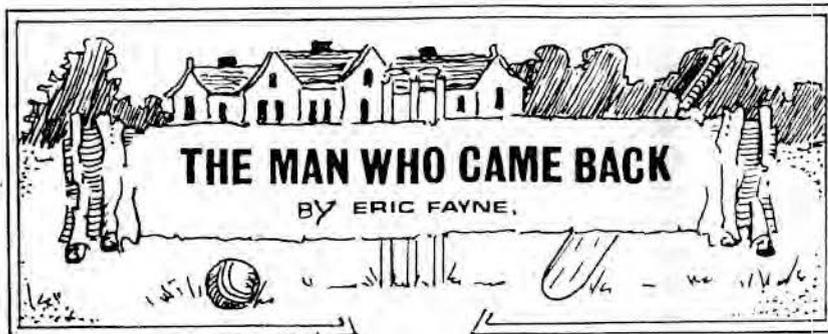
In later years Charles Hamilton would never have compressed all this into a mere quartet of stories, but the Ragged Dick series was typical of its time, with every number providing at least one climax, with the plot developing each week with no sense of repetition, and with a stunning grande finale to round it off most satisfactorily. Of course, Dick turned out to be a relative with the unmistakable Compton birthmark, though his ignorance of his parentage was a matter of skating over very thin ice indeed. There is no doubt that 1925 was something of a turning point: the author began to abandon the Gem in favour of the Magnet; the Rookwood series was not too far off its end; and the Magnet's glorious era was well and truly launched. The Ragged Dick series was only one of a number of splendid stories that lay ahead.

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SOLUTION TO ERNEST HOLMAN'S
CLEVER ANAGRAMS LAST MONTH

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|--------------------------|---|
| 1. KING OF THE ISLANDS | 19. HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH |
| 2. BARBARA REDFERN | 20. HARRY COMPTON |
| 3. STORY PAPER | 21. THE HOMICIDE CLUB |
| 4. SPLASH PAGE | 22. HARRY WHARTON AND CO.
IN HOLLYWOOD |
| 5. ERIC FAYNE | 23. THE REMOVE |
| 6. HOLIDAY ANNUAL | 24. HERCULES ESQ. |
| 7. PERCY BOLSOVER | 25. ERIC PARKER |
| 8. DICKY DALTON | 26. COLLECTORS' DIGEST |
| 9. THE RAG | 27. EDWY SEARLES BROOKS |
| 10. REGINALD TALBOT | 28. MONTY LOWTHER |
| 11. TRIANGLE | 29. THE TERRIBLE THREE |
| 12. LEONARD SHIELDS | 30. THE MASQUE OF TIME |
| 13. THE BOUNDER | 31. W. O. G. LOFTS |
| 14. THE RIO KID | 32. BILLY BUNTER |
| 15. GREYFRIARS SCHOOL | 33. MAURICE DOWN |
| 16. LESLIE CHARTERIS | 34. WALLY FREEMAN |
| 17. VALENTINE MORNINGTON | 35. MAULEVERER TOWERS |
| 18. WHARTON LODGE | |

A Quarter-Century ago Collectors' Digest published this flimsy little sentimental piece of comedy. We hope the many new readers of C.D. will enjoy it and that the "old boys and girls" won't mind reading it again after all these years.



At last I made up my mind to go back to St. Jim's. For weeks I had had that irrespressible longing to see the old school once more, to hear the boyish laughter, to feast my eyes on the loveliest sight in the world - the cricket field bathed in sunshine, and dotted with white-clad figures, while lads in bright blazers relaxed in the shadow of the trees round the boundary line. How my heart ached as the mental picture passed before me! Why had I waited so long to revisit the place which, secretly, I loved more than any other on earth?

Yet, with that intangible longing was intermingled a doubt, an uncertainty, almost a fear. For more than a quarter-century had gone by, and I knew that the old place must know me no more.

Carefully I took my old school tie from the mothballs, and, withtender, shaking hands I fastened it round my neck. Then I set off on what was to be the best or the worst day of my life.

At Wayland I changed trains. In the old days, we always changed at Wayland, leaving the main line express and boarding the little "push and pull" which chugged its way out to Rylcombe and beyond. I wondered whether the funny little train would still be running, whether it might have been

swept away before that heartless juggernaut - Progress.

It was still running. Caked on the carriage windows was the same grime which had never been washed away in twenty-five years. On the seat of my compartment was a scattering of crumbs which I felt sure I had dropped when eating a sausage-roll as a fag.

At Rylcombe I caught a glimpse of old Trumble, the porter, changed but little with the passing of the years. He had always seemed elderly to me. He seemed no older now.

At St. Jim's I made my way to the cricket ground. The same. Yet how different. For a few exquisite moments I stood still, and the years rolled back. In those few fleeting seconds I was back in my carefree boyhood, and ready to play for my House again.

I crossed the ground to the pavilion. Swarms of fellows in flannels were there, eyeing me with curiosity and with some resentment that I was invading their sacred sphere. Twenty-five years ago I could have joined in their chatter and talked loudly on school politics. Twenty-five years ago I would have been surrounded by cheerful pals. Now I was an interloper - less than a nobody.

With a beating heart and some temerity; I tapped a bright-faced youth on the shoulder. He turned and eyed me in

cold surprise.

"Excuse me", I said. A frog rose in my throat, and I spoke nervously. "What is the game this afternoon?"

"The game, sir?" He cast a glance across the ground. "House match on Little Side, New House versus School House. No game on Big Side. The seniors are playing away."

"I see - a junior House match on Little side. I'm in luck, aren't I?" I smiled, and he raised his eyebrows in polite question. "By the way, I'm an old boy".

The ghost of a grin flickered across his face, and I wondered whether I had expressed myself badly. He nodded patronisingly.

"Oh, yes? Do you want to see the Headmaster?"

I shook my head.

"Not just yet. I'm an old School House man, by the way."

I felt his manner grow frosty.

"I'm so sorry." He flickered an imaginary speck of dust from his spotless white trousers, "Excuse me, sir. I'm wanted with my eleven."

He raised his cap and left me.

Several other white-clad figures passed by. I felt inexpressibly lonely. I even began to feel annoyed. Years ago, as a School House prefect, I had been a blood, a great man - hero-worshipped. Then I enjoyed a pride which I have never experienced since. and now - now I found myself forgotten, neglected - a nobody.

A fellow approached me. He was completely sure of himself - as I can never be sure of myself again. His red and white blazer was thrown carelessly over one shoulder. He wore his St. Jim's cap on the back of his head, but with an air of authority. As I had once worn mine. His blue eyes twinkled in his sun-burned face, and I became acutely conscious of my own white, pasty complexion.

"Can I help you, sir?" he enquired. "Our game is about to begin. If you would care to watch the game from here, there are plenty of deckchairs ---"

"Are you a School House boy?" I ventured to ask, ignoring his invitation.

He pulled his cap a little further over his mop of curly hair, and regarded me curiously.

"Yes, sir. I'm junior House Captain as a matter of fact."

"I was a prefect once", I muttered. "I wore a cap like yours a long time ago - more than twenty-five years. I wonder what became of my cap. I wish I still had it."

He stared at me, and I - I, who had once snapped out orders on that very ground for immediate obedience - blushed under his keen, clean gaze.

"Didn't you look after it?" he asked coldly.

"Yes, I think I did for a time." I faltered a little. "But, you see, it was so long ago - things get mislaid or thrown away ---"

His clear blue eyes once more made me feel like a dead caterpillar in a helping of cabbage.

"You're an old St. Jim's man, and you didn't keep your school cap. What a pity! I don't remember seeing you here before, sir ---"

"No, this is the first time I have come back. You see, I live so far away - I am a very busy man - you see how things are?"

"I see." His tone showed me plainly that he did not see at all.

"I was a School House prefect before I left", I ventured timidly. "My name is Payne."

His face crumpled into a smile.

"I'm a School House chap, sir, Tom Merry of the Shell."

I shook hands with him.

"I once made 63 in a school match when I was here", I volunteered, proudly.

"Oh, yes?" he said.

"I hope you don't think me guilty of lift", I added naively.

"Lift?"

He raised his eyebrows.

"Swank!" I explained.

"Oh! Roll!" he said, with a laugh. "Not at all, sir!"

"I realised sadly that I was out of touch with St. Jim's slang.

"The School House was a grand place in my day", I murmured. "You don't know how lucky you are, Tom Merry. I think I'd give a year of my life to play cricket on Little Side again."

He regarded me curiously.

"Would you, sir?" He cast an eye in the direction of the group of fellows standing under the score board. With a word of excuse, he left me, and scudded across to his friends. I saw him standing in conversation for a couple of minutes, and a very elegant young cricketer, sporting a monocle, turned and scrutinised me. I saw him nodding to his skipper.

Tom Merry hurried back to me.

"We're playing New House juniors this afternoon", he said, "Would you care for a game sir? Only a junior game, of course, but if you'd like a knock ---"

My heart thumped with excitement.

"I should love it", I replied, enthusiastically. "But -- I have no whites ---"

Tom Merry ran an appraising eye over me.

"I reckon we can lend you a pair", he said. "I'll send Lowther to snaffle a pair for you from somewhere."

"How splendid!" I yapped, in my joy. "But I hope the New House skipper won't object. You see, I once made 63 ---"

Tom Merry smiled.

"I'm sure Figgins will be quite delighted", he said.

So I changed into whites, just as I used to do twenty-five years ago. In the changing room I chatted gaily to other members of the eleven, telling them of the things we used to do, and explaining how boyhood had deteriorated in the years since I was a lad. They listened politely.

The School House team batted first, and I was invited to go in third wicket down. As I crossed to the wicket a

ripple of cheering came from the New House field. I thought this very sporting, for they must have realised that I was a rod in pickle.

A lad named Talbot was at the other end, and he smiled his encouragement. I waved my bat in the air.

"I once made 63 on this pitch", I called out.

I took middle and leg. Then I stood upright for a full survey of the field. A very stout youth named Wynn was bowling, and I felt that I should find it easy stuff. He had set his field very wide, and a thrill of pride passed through me to see so many fieldsmen way out near the boundary.

"Play!" called out the stout bowler.

The ball came down, and I struck wildly where I thought it was. A lump of turf flew in the air. The wicket keeper returned the ball. I smiled at him, a rather sickly smile.

"It's good to be back", I remarked, apropos of nothing.

"Of course."

He did not smile. His eye was on the bowler. I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw Wynn calling his field in closer. A youth named Redfern, handsome as a Greek god, fielding at old-fashioned point, came to a place which was decidedly new-fashioned right on my doorstep. Mid-on came to unpleasant proximity. Slips stood very near and very expectant. Nobody was posted near the boundary now. My first stroke seemed to have given our opponents the impression that I was a rabbit. I, who had once made 63 on Big Side. I gritted my teeth. I would show them.

"Play!" called the stout bowler.

Determined that nothing should defeat me this time - with a fixed resolve to show these fellows how we used to play cricket in the old days - I lifted my bat. The ball whipped in from the off as though jet-propelled. I hardly saw it. I almost overbalanced with the impetus of the terrific swipe, and the clatter of my shattering wicket

told me the worst.

There was a ripple of applause, which may have been for me but was probably for the stout bowler.

With burning cheeks, I made my way to the Pavvy. As I took off my pads, Tom Merry came up to me.

"Hard lines, Mr. Fayne", he said kindly.

He had no intention of patronising me, but the irony of the situation struck me. I said no more of the 63 which I had once made.

Tom Merry declared when the score stood at 138. An Australian lad they called Kangaroo had accounted for 40 of these, and Tom Merry himself had scored 36. I began to wonder whether the present generation of St. Jim's fellows was so inferior, after all.

"I'm sorry I disappointed the side", I whispered to Tom Merry as we went out to field.

"Not at all", he replied. "Where do you usually field, by the way?"

"Oh, somewhere fairly deep", I said. "You chaps will like to feel you have a good man to snap up anything difficult."

The skipper nodded, and tossed the ball to a rather supercilious youth they called Cardew. I wasn't particularly keen on him. I had heard him make an unpleasant remark after I bagged my duck.

Cardew set his field. He called out to me.

"Fayne, further out! Further round! I said further round! More round!"

Mechanically I obeyed him. Twenty-five years ago I would have been a big bug, giving orders. Now I was a mere nobody who had made a duck - taking orders.

Cardew was a spin bowler of quite considerable merit, and he was interesting to watch though I did not like him personally.

Once the ball buzzed out my way. I dived after it. As I ran, there was a patter of feet behind me. A youth named Blake passed me, gathered up the

ball in his stride and returned it with a throw which I could not have equalled in a thousand years. This performance was repeated several times during the next half-hour, during which time the bowlers called to me "Fayne, deeper, please!" or "Fayne, come in a bit!"

By and by, two New House men, Figgins and an Indian lad named Kourai Rao, became set and the runs mounted.

I suggested to Tom Merry that he should let me have an over, if the New House Skipper did not think the School House players were taking an unfair advantage.

It seemed that the New House skipper did not mind at all. Tom Merry tossed me the ball, and I set my field.

Figgins knocked 4 off my first ball, 4 off my second and 4 off my third.

Tom Merry began to look slightly anxious.

"Keep off the leg, Mr. Fayne", he called out, and there was a marked edge to his voice.

I sent down a full toss for my fourth ball, and Figgins got right underneath it. It soared over the boundary for six.

I was perspiring freely. How I got through that over I shall never know. The sixth ball of the over flew out of my hand and hit the square leg umpire on the chin. He seemed irritated, and I felt that my profuse apologies were inadequate.

The School House players, at the end of my over which had added 27 to the New House score, were still polite to me, but I sensed that their cordiality was wearing thin.

I retired to a place in the deep. Soon my chance came.

Figgins tried for another six, this time off the bowling of Cardew, but it was falling short of the boundary. A high, dropping ball was coming towards me.

"Mr. Fayne! Mr. Fayne!" came a roar of voices.

I squared my shoulders. I cupped my hands and backed. I would show them

at last how we played cricket in the old days. Down, down. I backed, I ran forward. Down, down. Silence had fallen on the field.

My teeth were clenched. I would show them all something in the way of catches which they would never forget. This catch of mine should be the talk of the school for months to come.

I backed, I ran forward. And then my heart failed me. Still with hands cupped, I closed my eyes.

The ball did not touch my hands at all. It fell, with a hollow pong, clean on the top of my head.

I sat on the ground and roared like a bull.

They carried me to the changing room, and while the game was still going on, I folded my tent like the Arabs and silently stole away.

Which House won that memorable game I do not know. There was a heaviness at my heart in the knowledge that never again could I recall the days which are gone, the years which the locust hath eaten. Once I was a great man - a blood, with the power, authority, and influence of a king. I played my part for a time, all too short, in the world of school. The curtain fell, and I became a nobody. A nobody I must remain till the end of my days.

I have only one consolation. I was a St. Jim's man once.

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MIDLAND

There was a very good attendance for our April meeting, which included our popular Chairman, Tom Porter, after a period of bad health.

With Tom Porter present we were able to have our usual display features. The Anniversary Number was Nelson Lee Library dated 30th April, 1920, part of the Mordania series and 64 years old to the day. The Collectors' Item was the famous Brooks Bibliography.

Refreshments as usual were provided by Joan Golen, Joan and Vin Loveday, and Betty and Johnny Hopton. Generous Joan Golen paid for the tea and coffee.

Vin Loveday provided a new quiz in which a word or sentence

was given and by finding a word with the same meaning, a fictional characters' name was indicated. Geoff Lardner was the winner with 22 marks. I got 18. Tom Porter introduced a new feature based on the Greyfriars Who's Who. Quite a success.

Greyfriars Bingo was next on the agenda. I rarely win in this but went very close this time, needing only one name when Johnny Hopton popped in to foil me.

The final item came from Vin Loveday who read an imaginary letter (composed by Darrell Swift) from the Rev. C. Ponsonby who had married to Marjorie Hazeldene. Not much like the Pon we all know, but very amusing. So the meeting ended on a high note.

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

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

SOUTH WEST

Our Spring meeting was held on 21st April, at Tim Salisbury's home when eight attended.

Bill Lofts gave interesting and varied talks. These being on Sherlock Holmes, The Hotspur, Tiger Tim, Early Children's Papers and The Greyfriars Maps. Bill answered many of our questions.

Tim has been searching for new members and through an advertisement notice in one of the local papers two Greyfriars readers got in touch and, thrilled to know of the Club, are coming along to the autumn meeting.

After an excellent study tea, more questions were asked and plenty of gossip and exchange of views took place until it was time to close the enjoyable time together and look forward to the next meeting.

LONDON

A varied programme had been arranged for members' enjoyment at the May meeting held at the residence of the Harper family, Loughton, Essex. Bill Lofts opened proceedings with a fine discourse on the comic paper Chuckles and illustrated it with specimens of the paper, Bill mentioned that he has two specimens of the Greyfriars model made with the plans presented with some of the Chuckles issues.

Leslie Rowley read another couple of chapters from his version of what may have been written in one of the unpublished Magnets.

Following this there was an anniversary number of the Magnet on show, number 483 that was entitled Bunter-Trespasser, the date 12th May, 1917.

The two winners of Don Webster's Last Word Quiz were Eric Lawrence and Arthur Bruning.

A tape culled from "Biggles Flies Again", was supplied by Norman Wright, and also played over was Mark Jarvis' tape of William Philanthropist.

From the C.D. Annual of 1960 Winifred Morss read about the Champion and F. Addington Symons who was connected with that grand old boys' book.

Don Webster suitably thanked the Harper family for their hospitality.

Next meeting at Greyfriars, Hollybush Ride, Wokingham. Tea will be provided but bring your own comestibles.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 11th May, 1985.

We had eleven present and our new Chairman, Keith Smith, welcomed Margaret Atkinson who came along with her husband.

Arrangements were discussed concerning the Coral Jubilee Luncheon to be held the following Saturday. A few members from the Midland Club had asked to join us. It appeared that arrangements were working out well and a very enjoyable afternoon was envisaged for the 18th May. Michael Bentley confirmed that after the proceedings there would be an opportunity for a number of people to visit his private cinema to view a comedy film - a fitting way to finish off the day.

Comment was made on the increasing number of "private collectors" who were constantly advertising hobby books for sale - often at very high prices exceeding the prices charged by some dealers.

A number of members had heard the "Story Time" productions the previous week on the radio. Five girls' stories had been selected by Mary Cadogan. Keith Smith said that the story content of some of the well known girls' authors was inferior to some of the boys' literature. The final story in the series, was by "Hilda Richards" and was superior to the others. A recording of this story was played along with an excerpt from "The Chalet School" series.

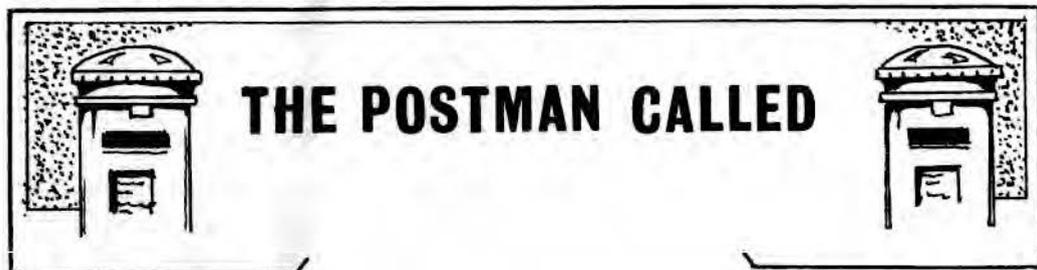
Harry Blowers presented one of his quizzes. Even though the

quiz on Hamiltonia was comparatively easy, from the fifteen questions asked only 60% were answered correctly. Bill Williamson was the winner.

Our next meeting will be held on 8th June. Visitors always welcome.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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L. S. ELLIOT (East Ham): I would like to make it clear, re "More on the Saint" April C.D., that I did not say "Meet the Tiger" became "She was a Lady". By some accident it appeared that way in C.D.

I corresponded with Leslie Charteris when we were both young, before he became famous. I still possess a studio portrait presented to me signed with little "Saints" after his autograph. I once possessed all his books in first editions and all the Thrillers, including the novelettes by him.

The book "She Was a Lady" became a Saint story, but, if I remember right, the original novelettes in the Thriller were not Saint tales. Charteris converted them into a Saint book for the hard-back. The only time, I believe - although in one Saint story he killed off an important villain, but kept him alive in the book.

When I taxed him with this, he replied that he did not realise some people read both magazines and books, so he thought he was safe.

Re Bill Lofts in Feb. C.D., "The Phantom Sheriff" in Wild West Weekly (of which I possessed the complete run) was a re-write of an American magazine featuring "The Shadow", a sort of "Just Man". Much as John G. Brandon wrote books about a character called A. S. Bannington (The Asp) who originally appeared in the Sexton Blake Library, etc., as R. S. V. Purvale (R.S.V.P.) Sexton Blake, in the books, was replaced by Det-Inspector McCarthy.

STAN KNIGHT (Cheltenham): After nearly 40 years of publication C.D. really is remarkable. It keeps virile, and, in fact, seems to have taken on a new lease of life with fresh contributors coming along to replace others who, alas, are no longer with us. Bob Cushing's recent letter struck a nostalgic chord when he remembered Ethel M. Dell's "Way of an Eagle". I read this when I was in Standard 6, but cannot recall what it was about or why it was in the school library. One other book I remember reading was "Alf's Button" something on the lines of Aladdin's lamp. Your editorials are always full of interest, as is Danny's Diary. In fact, there isn't a dull moment from start to finish. How you keep it up month after month is truly marvellous. Long may you, and it, continue.

HOWARD SHARPE (Hawthorn, Australia): What I must pay tribute to, while I think of it, are the Skipper's Editorials each month in C.D. You have the knack of expressing what the body of us feel and think, I believe. Certainly, this reader!

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Thank you, Sir, for your kind comments. Thank you, so many who write. You cover me with confusion, and have me understudying the frog in the fable.)

EDWARD MURCH (Dousland): The Dole! Relief paid to the unemployed from 1919 (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary). Alas, that so many of our people, through no fault of their own, are forced to draw it in the midst of so much affluence. I wonder what Skimpole would have to say about it! The C.D. maintains its high standard.

HAROLD TRUSCOTT (Deal): I am afraid Danny has slipped up this month. "Bordertown" starred Paul Muni (not Lukas) and Bette Davis.

One reaction I had to Harry Wharton & Co.'s Bank Holiday" was that it seemed to envisage a very difficult, if not impossible, event. The Co. travelled with Mauleverer by car to Birmingham, where they took an excursion train to Blackpool. Even by rising at six a.m. the journey, especially in 1912, must have taken at least a good seven to eight hours, if not more - excursion trains, in my experience, never did hurry themselves - and to have the adventures they did have and travel all the way back - in one day? It wants some believing, as Johnny Bull might say. I wonder why Hamilton did not choose Brighton as a more possible venue for his story.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Muni or Lukas? It was our fault. But you ought to see the awful handwriting of that Danny in his Diaries. He makes elephant look like hippopotamus.)

WILLIAM AND THE BEGGING LETTER



"YOU INFERNAL BLACKGUARD!" "FATHER!" EXPOSTULATED PHILIPPA.

One of the funniest of all the William stories (featured in 'William and A.R.P.' May 1939) The artist: the incomparable Thomas Henry who included in his superb drawings every detail as described by the authoress. Few writers were served better by their artist than Richmal Crompton.

FOR SALE: Original G.H.A. 1920. Full set of William books. What offers? DAWKINS, 33 IVY HOUSE PARK, HENLADE, TAUNTON, SOMERSET, TA3 5HR. 0823-442311.

NEW RIO KID STORIES

by W. O. G. Lofts

It is surprising what one can still find out these days that is completely new in the hobby. One could almost say astonishing when it concerns on of Charles Hamilton's famous characters - The Rio Kid.

In Derek Adley's record book of The Ranger, that was compiled many many years ago now, he lists a series of The Outlaw Kid that appeared in the initial small series of 1931. Nos. 8 to 17. Then much later in 1933 there was a single tale in No. 113. Derek has always assumed that these stories must have been reprints of earlier Popular tales, basing this fact simply because our editor has not mentioned them at all in his numerous articles about the famous sunburnt outlaw.

However, recently in writing to Eric about them, and the possibility of them being the same as the Boys' Friend Library issue No. 471. To my surprise he informed me that he had not heard of the series in The Ranger before. In fact if they had only been advertised at the time in other papers quite obviously he would have bought them.

Later, I have been able to establish from official records of the old Amalgamated Press that indeed the stories were Charles Hamilton originals as he was paid for them. Seemingly they were written for The Popular, but when this paper became 'The Ranger' they were used there under the new title.

I'm not qualified to say how good the stories are, only our editor is probably expert enough to do this. The series features Slick Samson, Texas Davis, Lillian Rose Judd and is about Bart Ranch and a haunted gold mine. The story starts with the good looking outlaw singing.....

"On our mustagro grey,
We rode away,
With the merry Ranger band,
And our campfire shone,
When the sun had gone,
On the banks of the Rio Grande."

Copies are rare of the early Ranger, but if any C.D. reader, has any issues with the numbers listed above, I'm sure our editor would be pleased to either purchase or borrow them for his interest and appraisal.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: We're learning all the time. Just when we think we know

everything about the old papers, something fresh turns up. I had no idea that the Rio Kid ever featured in the Ranger. Though many advertisements for the Ranger featured in the other papers, I never saw the Rio Kid advertised to appear therein. Quite remarkable!)

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RIFTS IN THE LUTE

by Tommy Keen

How many times in the MAGNET and the GEM (and probably the NELSON LEE as well), did a chapter heading 'A Rift in the Lute' appear? Possibly more times than one would imagine - it was the warning that a break was about to occur between the supposedly unbreakable friendship of certain of our favourite characters. Following 'A Rift in the Lute', further chapters would arise, 'A Split in the Study/Co.', 'Chums Divided' or 'Parted Pals', which would generally lead the way to 'Under the Shadow', and then the chapter we would all be waiting for, 'The Clouds Roll By'. In this final chapter, all misunderstandings would be cleared up, one chum would at last be willing to listen to the other's point of view (something which he had refused to do on numerous previous occasions), although the usual rather unsatisfactory ending to the feuds, entailed a life saving episode to bring the parted pals together again.

Surely there were more rifts in the lute in Study No. 4 of he Remove at Greyfriars than anywhere else! Poor Tom Redwing, how he suffered by the waywardness, and at times, very cruel taunts of the Bounder - Herbert Vernon-Smith. Time after time, Smithy's vicious jeers and blackguardly ways would compel Redwing to think that the friendship was definitely over, and at one time saying to Smithy, who wanted to make amends, "No, I don't want to be friends any more". But of course, they always made it up, such a magnificent pair of characters could not be apart for ever... more rifts in the lute would be required in further stories.

And so with Harry Wharton. At various times he had fallen out with Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, his closest chum, Frank Nugent, many, many, times, and even with the genial Hurree Jamset Ram Singh (at Wharton Lodge, of all places), and at times these Harry Wharton upsets were almost tragic, and quite moving. The final chapter of the Harry Wharton feuds, when the Famous Five were all reunited (even if unintentionally helped along by Bunter), was such a relief, knowing that these rather special five characters were all chums again, the friendship to be eternal... or, until the next misunderstanding.

St. Jim's had the same problems. Harry Manners of the Terrible Three was at times, at loggerheads with his best chums, Tom Merry and Monty Lowther, Lowther would fall out with Tom and Manners, Manners, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth, would often go on the 'high horse', and cause the inevitable rift with Blake, Digby, and Herries.

These friendships meant a lot to the characters concerned... and to the readers. Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing, Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, Tom Merry and Reginald Talbot, Cardew, Clive and Levison, and as so many 'rift in the lute' stories (which often ran into a series), appeared through the very long run of the MAGNET and GEM, Charles Hamilton evidently considered they were the right stuff to appeal to the readers.

I must admit, they always appealed to me!

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THE MORNING AFTER

by Ernest Holman

Jimmy Silver apart, the name most likely to come into the reader's memory when Rookwood is mentioned will be that of Valentine Mornington.

Comparison will always be made, of course, with Cardew and Vernon-Smith - but the resemblance is not great. Morny, admittedly, was like Smithy on their respective arrivals - just too bad to be true! Afterwards, however, there was a difference. Whenever the Cad and the Bounder showed the better sides of their nature, there was soon a reversion to truer type. With Mornington, there was a gradual, not too noticeable, change; after a while, certain goodpoints that showed through never entirely disappeared. When they were discarded for a backward step, the reversion never went too far back. In the end, Morny became quite acceptable as a reformed character - and of a more convincing calibre than in the cases of Levison, Pitt, Fullwood.

Morny was to experience several comings and goings at Rookwood - there were, in fact, times when he shared with Alonzo Todd the vision that 'now you see him, now you don't!' Mornington arrived at the school with a title - but this was of short duration. Not so his monocle, though; never bestowed by the author but graciously contributed by the artists, this adornment did not achieve the reader's credibility as in the case of Holmes' deer stalker and Bunter's check trousers!

Mornington left Rookwood for a variety of reasons; his first

excursion was temporary, and he returned in time to bounce a heavy tea-pot on the head of bully Higgs. (Some readers may not have wasted a lot of sympathy on the latter, perhaps?) He was then expelled for trying to cause Jimmy Silver's expulsion (he did achieve it, actually, but Jimmy was too spirited a youngster to accept such an affront). Fortunately for the departing schemer, he was able to rescue the Head's young daughter from a fire. (Did Harry Wharton ever hear about it?) So Morny stayed on.

His next exit was a tragic one, when he lost his sight as the result of a blow from a candlestick. Although not in France, he was in a train crash, was rescued by his original assailant, had a successful eye operation and returned. Later, he broke detention to play cricket, became a rebel and soon after received the Order of the Boot. He promptly settled down in the locality, plagued the school authorities and amused the rest of the school by taking various employments nearby. In order to ensure another return to Rookwood, he had to save the Head from drowning. (A touch of reminiscence here, too?)

Mornington's old ways returned when, on being dropped from the cricket eleven, he hatched a plot to discredit Jimmy. Although it succeeded, Morny confessed and again received the sentence of expulsion. Soon fed up with his Uncle's disapproval of him and finding the company of his cousins irksome, he left his home and met up with Jimmy & Co. The latter were on a walking tour, during the summer holiday, accompanied by a horse and trap kindly loaned to them by Mr. Frank Richards, a well-known writer. Morny joined the tour; his Uncle finally tracked him down, got into danger and had to be rescued by his nephew. The two then departed on friendlier terms.

Nevertheless, it was necessary for Morny to return to Rookwood. The school became haunted by the missing junior's voice; a new bootboy foiled the attempt of burglars, was revealed as Mornington and the latter was again entered on the school register as a pupil. From then on, he stayed. In fact, from that time, there were no particular Mornington adventures.

Adventures there had been, though, during his many sojourns at the school. His championing of 'Erbert Murphy', the waif who turned out to be the Heir to the Mornington money; the arrival of Kit Erroll as the son of Gentleman Jim; the incidence of the vanished schoolboys in the Lagden affair; all showed Morny well to the fore. He even underwent a not very successful spell as Junior

Captain; Erroll, in his turn, introduced a waif to Rookwood, much to Mornington's displeasure. As this particular waif turned out to be Dr. Chisholm's long-lost son, all was well. In their time, the two chums of Study 4 certainly made sure that the Headmaster was never short of a family.

After the second world war, when stories of the three Hamilton schools were once more appearing, the final difference between Mornington and 'earlier similars' was quite striking. One of the last sets of stories showed Cardew, at his worst, getting a thorough hammering from an angry Vernon-Smith; but at Rookwood, when Jimmy Silver was detained, the automatic choice of deputy cricket captain went immediately to Morny.

Considering the short life of Rookwood, as well as the short length of the stories (the whole Rookwood saga probably only covered the equivalent of two years' Golden Age Magnets) it was no mean achievement of the author in not only filling the canvas with so much of this character, but also managing to avoid any apparent rushing of character change.

Rookwood would have been nothing without Jimmy Silver; it might not have amounted to a great deal without Valentine Mornington.

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EVADNE PRICE - AN APPRECIATION

Many readers who are ardent fans of the "JANE" books by Evadne Price, will be saddened to know that this author passed away on 17th April - eight days before the compilation of Jane stories was to be published by Macmillan: the stories themselves being out of print for well over thirty years.

Evadne Price lived the past few years of her life with her husband in Australia and died at the age of 89 in hospital.

Fortunately, an advance copy of the book "JANE AND CO." had arrived at Evadne Price's home prior to her death, so she was able to handle and appreciate it. She had been delighted when the publishers approached her for possible reprinting of the stories.

Another great author has now left us. Her fans will be very sad. The publication of the Jane book is sure to bring about more enthusiasts: like many great authors Evadne Price has been grossly under-rated - but like great authors she will no doubt be appreciated for her wit and style in her stories, after her death. Even in these circumstances her husband in Australia will be thrilled.

Thank you Evadne for the pleasure your Jane stories have given us.

DARRELL SWIFT