

STORY PAPER

Collectors Digest



OCTOBER 1985

Vol. 39

No. 466

52P

Bob Whiter
after
C.H. Chapman

Billy Bunter spoofs Gosling

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A WORD FROM THE SKIPPER.

DOYLE & HAMILTON.

Recently I saw on television a Sherlock Holmes story entitled "The Greek Interpreter." No doubt plenty of my readers watched it, too. I do not recall ever reading the story, but I presume that it was genuine Conan Doyle. I wonder from which collection it came. Does anybody know?

An interpreter is taken, under sinister circumstances, to interview and get information from a kidnapped man who speaks nothing but Greek. Explaining the case to Sherlock Holmes, the interpreter mentions that he tacked a question in Greek on to the end of his items of conversation with the kidnapped man, a subterfuge undetected by the kidnappers who were watching and listening. The victim tacked pieces into his replies in the same way.

Though I could not remember any link with my knowledge of the Doyle stories, I found a decided link with Hamilton. In an early Cedar Creek tale, the schoolboy, Frank Richards, who has been taught French in his English school, is taken under sinister circumstances, to interview a kidnapped man who speaks nothing but French. Frank

tacks items on to his questions to the kidnapped man, who in his replies, also tacks on bits of information in French in his replies. The gang of kidnapers does not realise that the Cedar Creek school-boy is being put "au fait" with the circumstances of the case.

In his earlier career, Hamilton was not averse to "lifting" parts of plots from the work of other writers. As everybody is aware, the blue Gem Story "The Black House on the Moor" is a plagiarism of Doyle's "Speckled Band." And the delightful Herlock Sholmes tales are evidence that Hamilton was well acquainted with his Doyle.

INEX-QUEUE-SABLE!

For the older people in our clan, generally speaking, the "progress" of much vaunted modern times is often a deterioration compared with the old days. It may not be so bad in your own area, but here, in the little town of Fleet which is a mile from Excelsior House, the "queue for everything" habit is one of my big "beefs".

The Post Office is, probably, the worst culprit. You get on the end of a line of, if you are lucky, ten people, or, quite possibly, twenty or thirty people. There is a notice up at the head of the line - "Please wait here till a position becomes vacant." A wag had added, with a ball-point pen - "or till Death, whichever comes soonest."

For the most part there are only two clerks on duty, which seems woefully insufficient when one considers the giant profits the post office makes, the unemployment, and, of course, the length of the queues.

Then the supermarkets when it is often difficult to find what you want and assistants seem unwilling or unable to give you information. When we came to Fleet 14 years ago there were seven grocery shops in the main street. You picked your shop, got quick attention, asked for what you wanted, and paid for it. All over in five minutes.

Today there are just two grocery shops - the two supermarkets. You get in easily enough. Getting out is the problem, with long queues at each check-out, people buying ten, twenty, thirty pounds worth of goods - and then writing out cheques for them in plenty of cases. Perhaps I'm just unlucky. I land on the queues where ladies flourish their chequebooks.

Not a conductor on any bus now, so one has to queue to get aboard, while the driver issues tickets, gives change, and looks up the correct fares. And, this summer, usually in the rain.

One thing, we shall be prepared if we have to queue for Heaven. I only hope that when I reach the gates I shan't be told I'm on the wrong queue.

RE-BIRTH

This month our distinguished contributor J.E.M. has written me as follows:

"I greatly enjoyed Brian Doyle's "No Escape from Bunter." His comments remind us that the fashion for writing new accounts of well-known fictional characters has already produced some entertaining novels. Apart from the famous Flashman stories by G.M. Fraser, there have been two stories about Sherlock Holmes's arch-foe, Moriarty, by John Gardner, and now, most recent of all, "The Adventures of Inspector Lestrade" by M.J. Trow. All good fun, these novels often explore the 19th century background in even greater depth than the original authors did, frequently bringing in famous real-life figures."

J.E.M.'s letter sent my mind back to an editorial I wrote for C.D. nearly 20 years ago. Here it is:

IS THIS RE-BIRTH REALLY NECESSARY?

Last month, one of our contributors gave us the information that Flashman, the bully of "Tom Brown's Schooldays," is to be re-born in a new novel next year. Our contributor wrote: "It all sounds fascinating and a great idea. It now only remains for some bright writer to launch another novel about the characters of Greyfriars School in their later adult lives. What possibilities there would be!"

So the idea fascinated one C.D. reader. I must confess that it sounds horrible to me. I like to think of the Greyfriars characters as they were, as their author depicted them. I have no wish at all to read about what happened to Harry Wharton & Co after they grew up, especially written by some modern novelist. Nowadays authors and script-writers seem unable to leave anything alone, and if it is a person or a tradition especially beloved, then that is all the more reason for traducing it. You may not agree with me, but, personally, I should simply hate a last exit from Greyfriars.

At the time, many readers wrote to say that they agreed with me. I think that, all these years later, plenty of those readers may have changed their view, and I may well be in a minority of one. But I still think the same as I did at that distant time.

THE EDITOR

Danny's Diary



October 1935

I'm starting off my Diary this month with Modern Boy, because I find it, at the moment, the least interesting of my papers. That's because I really like school stories best, and Modern Boy deals mainly with adventure. My brother Doug says it's because Modern Boy is the most intelligent of all papers, and I'm the most unintelligent of all boys. Listen to who's talking!

I like the Captain Justice tales. First in a new series is "Slaves of Science City". Isolated in a vast forest, a band of world-famous scientists have built workshops, power houses, and laboratories. Suddenly, Captain Justice gets a frantic S.O.S, urging him to dash to the rescue of the Slaves of the Science City.

The next story in this series about the Science slaves is "Shadow-Men of Ambani". Next came "The Creeping Menace", with Justice having sworn to rescue the science slaves. Then came "The Wireless Eye", with Captain Justice using television to aid him in his search for the scientists. The series continues next month. It's good, and unusual.

There is also a good series about a jungle railway by John Brearley, and the Biggles serial is "Biggles Flies East."

One item in Modern Boy's Puzzle Corner was, I thought, extremely good this month. Five words were missing from a poem, and all the five words were composed of the same six letters. There was just a clue that the verse referred to a part of Ireland.

The following was the solution:

Oh, ULSTER, land of mountains grey,
 Thou LUREST all my thoughts away!
 I hear a RUSTLE from each tree,
 The LUSTRE of thy moon I see.
 RESULT - I think of naught but thee.

At school, my form went up in a party to London to the New Theatre, where we saw "Romeo and Juliet". Peggy Ashcroft played Juliet, and the play was produced by a man named John Gielgud. I didn't really like it much, but I didn't say so to Doug.

There is a new weekly paper out called the Pilot. I had the first issue, but it doesn't really appeal to me. It is mainly adventure stories. Most interesting is a serial called "The Cannibal Earl", which reminds one a bit of Tarzan. An English boy has been brought up by a savage African tribe and is made leader of these fierce warriors. He is found by some explorers and is discovered to be the lost heir to an Earldom. He is brought to England and sent to Claremont school, but he can't forget the ways he learned in the African jungle.

They gave away a Football Annual with No. 1 of the Pilot, supposed to be edited by Dixie Dean, the famous footballer.

The Greyfriars story in the Schoolboys' Own Library is called "Ragged Dick" and I liked it muchly. Sir Henry Compton befriends a waif and sending him to Greyfriars, pretends that he is his, Sir Henry's grandson. This is to stop a rascal of a cousin from inheriting the vast estates. One of those tales about a missing heir, and based on coincidence. Very good.

The other S.O.L. is "Chums of Castaway Island" which is continuing about Jim Dainty & Co of Grimslade, with their Head, Dr. Sammy Sparshott in battle on a desert island with a ruthless scoundrel.

I also had a Boys' Friend Library entitled "The Secret Seven", which is another crime story introducing Slade of the Yard.

Italy has invaded Abyssinia. In the League of Nations and in plenty of countries there is a call for sanctions against Italy. France is particularly against sanctions as they don't want to annoy Mussolini, the Italian dictator.

The opening story of the month in the Gem is "One 'O The Best", and it is the sequel to last month's tale where Grimes, the grocer's boy, became a St. Jim's junior. Levison is Grimes's enemy, yet the kind-hearted Grimes is the one who saves Levison from expulsion. At the end of this tale, Grimes decides that he isn't cut out to be a St. Jim's fellow, so he goes back to being a grocer's

boy.

Next yarn is an excellent one, "The Plot Against Tom Merry". The plotter is a rascally prefect named Bingham (we haven't heard of him before) who hates Tom Merry. With the aid of a scoundrel named Pudsey Smith, Bingham brings about the expulsion of Tom Merry. There is a gorgeous chapter in which Miss Priscilla Fawcett, Tom's guardian, tells Dr. Holmes what a rotten Headmaster he is. Great tale of drama, fun, and thrills.

Next, "The Captain's Rival". A story of footer and the feud which breaks out between the seniors of the two Houses at St. Jim's. A well above average story. Finally, a real rib-tickler entitled "The Wrong Team". It causes a stir at St. Jim's when a famous amateur team, the Thebans, challenge Tom Merry's eleven to a game. But the Thebans thought they were dealing with a different eleven. Still, the game takes place, with Fatty Wynn a great defender in goal. Jolly good month in every way.

Another tramway system has been scrapped, alas. This time it is at Warrington, where the trams have been replaced by buses.

The autumn programmes are attractive in the local cinemas. "Evelyn Prentice" I found a bit heavy-going, though there are some good courtroom scenes, and William Powell and Myrna Loy are tip-top in it. "Music in the Air" was a bit dreary, with Gloria Swanson and John Boles. About an opera star who is in love with two men, and can't make up her mind.

Barbara Stanwyck is pretty good in "The Woman in Red", and one I liked very much was "Call of the Wild" which has a lovely dog in it as well as Clark Gable, Loretta Young, and Jack Oakie. It is from a book by Jack London. Doug says it is not very true to the book, but it's great entertainment if you forget the book.

A lovely operatic musical is "Naughty Marietta" which stars Jeanette Macdonald and Nelson Eddy. There is a truly lovely song in it, "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life". A great film.

Another terrific musical is "Gold Diggers of 1935", starring Dick Powell and a crowd of Warner stars. It has some great songs, and ends with the smash-hit number "Lullaby of Broadway". So this has been a great month for musicals and for wonderful new songs.

Yet another musical, a British one this time - on more moderate lines but quite good with some good songs is Gracie Fields in "Look Up and Laugh".

Mum and I went to the first house at Holborn Empire one night. Top of the bill was Max Miller, the cheeky chappie; Elsie Bowers and

Billy Rutherford, a prize pair; Larry Adler, who plays the mouth-organ and Scott Sanders who is a comedian. Marvellous bill.

Another night Doug took me to New Cross Empire where we saw the revue "What a Game", starring Freddie Forbes and Angela Barrie.

The new series about Jim Warren, the new senior in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, has gone on through October. In the first tale of the month "Greyfriars Idiot No. 1", Coker gets a scent of the mystery about Warren. Harry Wharton and his pals know that the new senior is not the real James Warren, and now Coker tries to get to the root of the matter and shows what a chump he is.

Next week "The Boy with a Borrowed Name" continues the series. Price, the black sheep of the Fifth, takes a hand to try to find out why Warren has come to Greyfriars under a borrowed name.

The mystery continues in "Bunter Tells the Truth." Bunter tells so many fibs that it is small wonder nobody believes him when he tells the truth in this story.



WHO IS HE?—

Jim Warren, heir to an old English title, as all at Greyfriars believe—or a stranger who has stolen Jim Warren's identity—a boy with a borrowed name? No one is more puzzled than Harry Wharton.

Final of the month is "Saved by his Enemy" in which Price looks like landing real trouble on the shoulders of the mysterious Warren, but Loder, unintentionally, takes a hand and puts a spoke in the wheel of the plotting Price. This excellent series goes on next month. It contains a lot of delicious side bits, and I am enjoying it a lot.

There is a new serial "Dan of the Dogger Bank" in the Magnet, but I have never got the time to read the serials.

Funny Wonder 1925; Larks 1936; Chips 1937; £2 each
Playtime 1919 Dec. 13th, 1919 Dec. 20th £3 each.
Armada Billy Bunter £1 each. E. Blyton hardback
and paperback 30p and 20p. Bunter books £2 each.
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Olympus, Sandford Mill Road, Chelmsford, Essex.

FOR SALE: Greyfriars Press and Book Club volumes,
many out of print. S.a.e. to Laurie Young, 211,
May Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 4AW.

NOTES ON THIS MONTH'S "DANNY DIARY".

S.O.L. No. 253 "Ragged Dick" comprised the 4-story Magnet series from the one S.O.L. involved some shrinking of the story, but it actually makes a very good novel in the medium and is quite outstanding. S.O.L. No. 254 "Chums of Castaway Island" came, of course, from the Grimslade series in the Ranger.

The 1935 Gem story "One O' The Best" had been "One Of The Best" late in 1912. "The Plot Against Tom Merry" had been "The Prefect's Plot" a couple of months earlier in 1912.

"The Captain's Rival" had appeared under the same title at the end of 1912. It had first appeared in the paper Pluck, before Tom Merry went to the school, and it was rewritten, by Hamilton himself, for the Gem of 1912. It had been a very long story in 1912, and lost some chapters when reprinted. Curiously enough, there were three stories in this excellent Kildare-Monteith series, but for some reason they were published separately, well apart from one another, in 1935.

The Kildare-Monteith stories are very reminiscent of Talbot Baines Reed's story "The Willoughby Captains", and I have long thought this was probably the reason Hamilton dropped the moody Monteith, an excellent character, from the St. Jim's tales after blue Gem days.

"The Wrong Team" had appeared under the same title, following "The Prefect's Plot" a little earlier in 1912.

The film "Naughty Marietta", based on an old Stromberg operetta, was enormously popular, gaining an Oscar or two, and it introduced Macdonald-Eddy as the most popular singing pair on the films for years to come.

WANTED: Magnet Bound volumes, Cassel/Skilton Bunters, Newnes William in dust wrappers, also books by E. BRENT-DYER, A. BRAZIL, E.J. OXENHAM. COLIN CREWE, 12B WESTWOOD ROAD, CANVEY ISLAND, ESSEX.

"Identification guide to D.C. Thomson Annuals" by Lofts/Adley: £2.75. "The Hotspur Catalogue 1933 to 1959" by Lofts/Adley: £3.25. "The Thriller Index" (1929 to 1940) by Lofts/Adley: £1.95. All three titles available exclusively from Alan Cadwallender, 48 Cornwall Crescent, Brinnington, Stockport, Cheshire. SK5 8HB. All prices include 2nd class U.K. postage.

(Will all my old friends and customers please note that I am not, regrettably, back in business as a comic dealer).

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FORTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKE (Conclusion)

By W.O.G. LOFTS

Looking back on forty years of Sexton Blake - the character has certainly provided me of countless hours of pleasure, plus almost that amount of time spent on research concerning the history of Baker Street's famous sleuth. It has enabled me to make many friends from all walks of life, as well as so many contributors to the saga including editors, authors, and artists.

Certainly I view the stories far different today, than when I first read them as a somewhat immature soldier in the Far East. In those days the flaws in the stories passed me by, but I can now see the limitations in so many of the tales, as well as knowing the good writers from the bad. I can also appreciate the market what they were aimed for. I've raised this point before, but the so many characters whom Blake pitted his wits against I have never cared for. Whilst he usually defeated them in the end when they were safely behind bars, at least I knew in my mind that they would obviously escape to resume in the near future their combat against Sexton Blake.

The Sexton Blake Library finished with No. 526 "The Last Tiger" June 1963 and written by W.A. Ballinger (actually a combination tale of three authors, W. Howard Baker, W. McNeilly, and Arthur Maclean) the title I remember specially devised to be in unision of the very first story 'The Yellow Tiger' by G.H. Teed in 1915. When this seemed the end of Sexton Blake. But this was not to be, as in February 1965 came the first of the Mayflower paperbacks price 2/6d. Here W. Howard Baker was free from the restrictions of the copyright holders, and was able to bring back more of the old type of Blake, with Mrs. Bardell, Pedro, and Baker Street, though he still

had his offices in Berkeley Square. This new series was numbered up to No. 41 with the price increased to 3/6d from No. 13.

Only four issues came out after No. 41, then they went to hardcovers price 16/- compared to the original 1915 issues that cost 3d. One can gauge the inflation cost since those days! Of the few hard cover Blake's the last two were reprints by Jack Trevor Story - but the story before "Case of the Missing Million" by Peter Saxon is at the moment a mystery in itself. The authors name inside the cover was 'Peter Gordon' - a name that the editor remembers the writer requesting. The artist however, was so used to lettering 'Peter Saxon' on cover work that he forgot the name as requested by the editor, when it was too late to change for publication date.

As this was now some fifteen years ago since the last original story was published, plus records buried somewhere, at the moment the editor cannot recall the original author, though he strongly suspects it was a woman - Dail Ambler a prolific writer of paperbacks who died only a few years ago.

But the biggest mystery I have never been able to solve, nor is it possible to elucidate today, is who was the unfortunate serviceman who left a Sexton Blake Library in native hut in the jungles of Burma, later occupied by the Japanese? Finding this started me off on the whole saga so far of forty years of Sexton Blake.

TINKER TAKES A HOLIDAY

by O.W. Wadham

Through the kindness of collector Frank Knott, of Lower Hutt, New Zealand, I recently secured a copy of NEW ZEALAND CHUMS ANNUAL. The volume is undated, but it was apparently some year in the 1940 decade, and consisted of eight monthly issues of 22 pages. No issues were dated or numbered, so maybe publication was commenced in May of the year in question.

Running through every issue is a Sexton Blake serial called "The Flaming Frontier", by John Brearley. In that serial Tinker plays no part, and no mention is made even of Pedro the bloodhound.

Blake, acting as a special agent for British Intelligence, successfully fights Nazi agents in a battle of wits along the Indian frontier. The author apparently decided that location was no place for Tinker, and could be he was right seeing the way bullets were wildly flying.

I presume that story was published before in England, maybe in the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY, because that same issue of CHUMS has another serial called "Gaunt of the White Tong", by Edwin Dale. That story was originally published in number 254 of CHAMPION LIBRARY in 1939.

Both stories mentioned are well illustrated in N.Z. CHUMS, the Blake yarn by Conrad Frieboe, the Tong tale by H. Drury.

A CLUTCH (OR SHOULD IT BE A PINCH) OF DETECTIVES

A little while ago whilst browsing through a secondhand bookshop I chanced upon a book entitled Fifty Detective Stories.

This set me thinking, if there were fifty modern detectives could I think of the same amount of 'tecs of my younger days. Herewith the result of my cogitations.

Being me, I naturally thought of Edwy Searles Brooks first so let us start, one of his early efforts was Frank Kingston a sort of early Waldo, serialised in the Gem. Then we have Eileen Dare Lee's lady assistant, comic relief was provided by Tracket Grim supposedly written by the one and only Handforth, and Podge and Midge who appeared in the O.S. series featuring the arrival of Jerry Dodd, and in later days a more grown up detective, old Iron or Inspector Cromwell.

Nelson Lee himself was of course the brain child of Maxwell Scott, although E.S.B. probably did most to popularise him, returning to Scott, he was also represented by Martin Dale (Chums) Kenyon Ford and Vernon Read (Big Budget) and Gordon Gay (Detective Weekly).

The Champion gave us Curtis Carr, Kingston Carew and Panther Grayle.

What splendid names our heroes had in those days!

One of the first weeklies I ever read, the Pink 'un or Boys Magazine featured the Sporting 'Tec, the Monocled Manhunter, who else but Falcon Swift.

Murray Graydon who wrote of both Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake also gave birth to Gordon Fox and Carfax Baines both of whom appeared in the Lee, and also one Abel Link (Boys Friend).

I must not forget Charles Hamilton with Ferrers Locke of the Magnet and Gem, and also Len Lex the schoolboy detective of the Modern Boy.

Nick Carter and Dixon Hawke of course both had their own libraries.

The early Newnes libraries had a gentleman named Tubby Haig and also the opposition to Dick Turpin who were really early 'Tecs I suppose, Johnathan Swift (the thieftaker) and Brady Grimshaw among others.

Jeffrey Farnol told us of Jasper Shrigg an admirable sleuth who appeared in many of his excellent romances.

Sexton Blake who we have already mentioned, must have been written about by more authors than any other detective I should think, the roll must be legion.

The early boys paper Pluck seemed to cater for more 'Tecs than most magazines, there were Joe Dale, Stanley Dare, Dr. Nevada, Middleton Moore, John Smith, Martin Stern, Will Spearing and Kit and Cora Twyford.

The School Friend had a young fellow called Terry Brent, and the Eagle (first series) sported Harris Tweed in a strip cartoon, the Jester comic carried a sleuth by the name of Hawkshaw and I seem to remember a character entitled Ivor Clue in a comic but cannot recall which.

I am afraid my score falls short of the 50, but I have no doubt that our many readers will be able to rectify that.

E.B. Grant-McPherson



NELSON LEE AND THE SPY-MASTER

by J.E.M.

Few readers of the Digest can know less about the Nelson Lee than I do. Memories of a brief youthful encounter seem to be limited to E.O. Handforth and his Austin Seven (or was it a Morris Minor?) and - very odd! - the Moor View girls. So much, then, for my experience of the St. Frank's saga.

However, I am well acquainted with the works of Eric Ambler. He, rather than John Buchan, is the father of the spy thriller in its present-day form. Ambler's novels - The Dark Frontier, Journey into Fear, etc - blazed the trail for later authors like John Le Carré and Len Deighton. But what on earth has all this to do with Nelson Lee?

And why, with my admitted ignorance of the NL, am I bothering to write under this masthead at all?

The fact is I have just been reading Ambler's recently published

and hugely enjoyable autobiography and in this he confesses to having been, in his youth, an ardent Lee-ite. Since it is hard to believe that this early reading left no mark on his own literary development, it is, perhaps, worth looking at his comments on the NL. Not that his journey into the world of old boys' books is either solemn or sentimental. It is not even particularly respectful. At best it is tongue-in-cheek.

For instance, he dismisses the Boys' Own Paper as "straight-laced" (and therefore by implication boring). Having declared his enthusiasm for the Lee he hurries on to say that he can't help finding Lee and Nipper a rather odd combination. "St. Dominic's would have had nothing to do with either of them. Stalky and Co. would have steered clear for social reasons. Even Greyfriars would have hedged. St. Frank's was really a most peculiar place..."

However, Mr. Ambler also found it an exciting place - a real "blood-and-thunder school" - which put "soppy old St. Dominic's" and all those other scholastic establishments in the shade. In a word, "I liked the Nelson Lee stories." He did indeed, confessing that he acquired them literally in bundles from a school friend. It is, perhaps, also of interest that he was at the same time reading such works as Green's Short History of the English People and textbooks on inorganic chemistry. His entry to London University was only three or four short years away, the first of his famous thrillers hardly more than a decade distant.

The next time, then, that I read, or watch on TV, one of those exciting if complicated spy stories, I shall be tempted to think that perhaps - just perhaps - Nelson Lee played a part, however small or remote, in its birth.

It may be that Lee-ites not yet familiar with Eric Ambler's novels will be tempted by these few lines to make their acquaintance. As a quid pro quo I really ought to start getting to know the NL better. Will some kind expert tell me the best part of the saga at which to start...?

---END---

STRANGE LATE ORDER BATSMEN

By H. HEATH

Charles Hamilton used the great summer game of cricket as a background to some of his finest writings - the Lancaster, Stacey and the Da Costa series in the Magnet spring readily to mind.

After making due allowance that my knowledge of St. Frank's stories is not very comprehensive, it seems to me that the cricket background for Nipper & Co. is on a much reduced scale. Happily

there is a notable exception in the enjoyable Terry Dodd series. These stories first appeared in the Nelson Lee in 1921, and then later in NOs. 342 and 345 of the Schoolboys' Own Library.

In the Jerry Dodd series, two inter school matches played against Bannington Grammar School and Helmsford College are described with a wealth of detail. All the members of the Bannington and Helmsford teams are named in batting order as is the order of batsmen dismissed. In the case of the Helmsford XI, ten of the individual scores are stated, and the eleventh can be calculated on the basis that there appears to be no Extras. Each of these games so well described by Brooks are of single innings duration. The total scores are considerably higher than matches featured in the Magnet and Gem as can be seen from the undermentioned final scores:-

Bannington G.S. ...	292	St. Frank's ...	296 for 9 Wickets
Helmsford College ...	281	St. Frank's ...	282 for 9 Wickets

I have always enjoyed the descriptions of these games, but there is a common puzzling factor. Why did Brooks have the best batsmen and this also applies to the St. Frank's XI, bat so low in the order?

The best Bannington batsmen are stated to be Arthur Grey (Captain), Gregg, Collins and Browne. These four players proceed to bat at Nos. 8,9,10 and 11 respectively. Grey scores 75 not out, and with Gregg shares in a huge partnership of 162. Against Bannington, Nipper comes in at No. 10 to score an unbeaten 40 odd runs, whilst the highly talented Jerry Dodd (who in this match is impersonating Timothy Tucker) batting at No. 11 scores over 90 not out. Dodd bowls only three balls to dismiss Gregg, Collins and Browne for no runs.

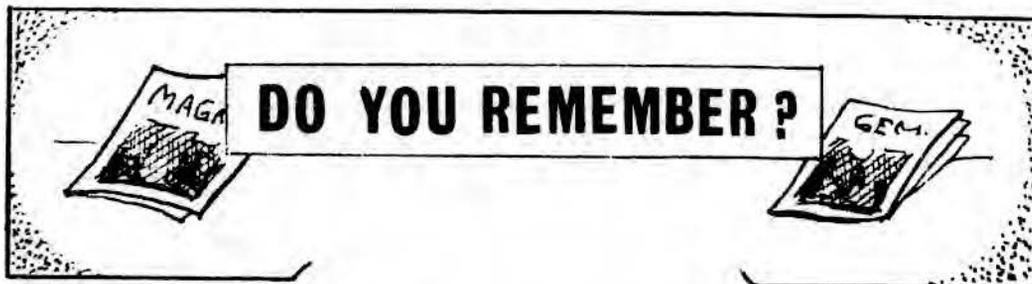
The Helmsford Captain, Walford, bats at No. 11 and scores 45 not out. In this match Nipper also bats at No. 11 for another 40 odd not out, and shares in another big stand with Dodd, who this time at No. 8 scores over 200 not out. As he only receives parental permission to play when the St. Franks score is 18 runs for 6 wickets, No. 8 was the highest position that Dodd could have batted. As Helmsford had batted first, the St. Frank's sensation did not bowl in this match.

This batting order does puzzle me. I cannot imagine Harry Wharton or Tom Merry coming in at No. 10 or 11, the positions occupied by Nipper in these matches. Nevertheless, it was a fine series with splendid descriptions of both games. On the evidence of this series, as regards cricket, it is my opinion that Brooks was more readable than Hamilton.

Jerry Dodd goes onto play in a Test Match against Australia. He also stays on at St. Frank's and this must have created a problem for Brooks. Dodd's playing ability was such that in the future he

surely would have to have been omitted from the St. Frank's Junior XI.

Perhaps a reader can throw some light on this self created problem?



No. 207 - Magnet No. 1309 - "Popper's Unpopular Prize"

By Roger M. Jenkins

The relative merits of single stories and series cause considerable debate. In the early years of the Magnet and Gem, of course, nearly all stories were singles, and series were rare indeed, but by the early 'twenties the balance had begun to tilt in the opposite direction. There can be no doubt that even in later years there were some excellent single stories, and Eric Fayne once wrote a memorable Annual article entitled "Single to Happiness". Nevertheless, it is usually the series that are etched deeply in the reader's mind and indeed some of the later single stories appear to be little more than pot-boilers.

"Popper's Unpopular Prize", with its delightfully alliterative title, dates from the early Spring of 1933. It opens strikingly enough with a rag in the French class, organised by Skinner. Most of the Removites brought in carnival balloons and blew them up, letting them expire one by one underneath the desks with a squeaking noise. When Mossoo realised what had happened, he ordered everyone with a balloon to bring it forward, whereupon the Removites blew them up, tied them up, and let them all sail through the air towards the French master, a scene lovingly depicted on the cover. At this moment Mr. Quelch entered and caned the whole form, as a preliminary measure. One wonders what the Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg would have said about that.

Skinner declared that French masters were born to be ragged and that Quelch was upsetting an ancient tradition. It is true that teachers in France undertake little in the way of disciplinary

measures and this might account for the tradition. It is also a fact that Quelch's intervention was somewhat discourteous in that he took the matter out of Monsieur Charpentier's hands with little ceremony, but then it was made clear on various occasions that Quelch had scant respect for a master who could not keep order.

After a promising beginning, the story seemed to lose its way, with a picnic on Popper's Island and an encounter with a party of violent footpads. Sir Hilton was grateful for being saved and offered five pounds as a prize for a competition. Mr. Quelch chose a French essay, with punishments for those gaining less than 50%, which accounted for the unpopularity of the prize.

The story was unusual in concentrating on the occupants of Study No. 10 - Bolsover and Dupont. The minor characters very seldom played any part in later years of the Magnet and, though the quarrel between them was integrated into the story, Charles Hamilton could well have achieved the same effects without them. 1933 set the record for single stories by the genuine author in the last twenty years of the Magnet. Perhaps it was inevitable that inspiration should flag a little at times.



**The Maynard's Greyfriars
Trade Cards.** BY BOB WHITER.

I was most interested in Paul Galvins' mention of the Maynards Ltd. trade cards featuring the Greyfriars characters. I am fortunate in possessing a complete set. The set consists of twelve cards, each the size of a normal cigarette card. Pictured by C.H. Chapman, they are drawn in black and white and tinted with pink and blue mechanical stipple.

Not numbered, the backs of the cards merely bear the title: Maynards Ltd., Chocolate Cigarettes and an accompanying brief storyette about the picture, each of which makes some excuse for the character in question to be either "Smoking" or in possession of a chocolate cigarette.

One card shows Harry Wharton being admonished for smoking in the close by Doctor Locke, who when told it was a Maynard chocolate cigarette, replied that his eyes had deceived him and that it was permissible and very beneficial for Wharton to eat one!

The next card has Mr. Quelch accusing Bunter of smoking in class and making him turn out his pockets. Of course Bunter had eaten the "cigarette" and no others were found. The story on the card ends with "Bunter returned to his seat looking as if butter would not melt in his mouth, but a Maynard's Chocolate Cigarette had just done so!"

Bunter features in four other cards - on one he offers a "fag" to Gosling whose horror stricken face changes as he quickly avails himself when he realises they are edible.*

Bunter at his study window apparently in funds (his postal order arrived at last?) drinking beer and smoking a cigarette, is the subject of another card. Wharton and Cherry run to warn him of Mr. Quelch's nearness only to find the beer is of the ginger variety and the cigarette, chocolate. The next Bunter Card shows the fat owl being bumped for prying into one of Wharton's letters. It had been sent with a box of "cigarettes" - of course Bunter had lost no time in telling the fellows that their Captain was a secret smoker. Until they realised they were Maynard's, the chaps were jolly fed up with Wharton, after which they helped Harry to eat them and then bump Bunter!

Harold Skinner features in the last Bunter card - he, Skinner thinks he has seen Wharton Smoking in the close and together with Bunter and the other "blades" proceeds to search Wharton's locker. His joy on finding a packet of cigarettes turns to chagrin when he realises they are chocolate!

Two of the other cards deal with sports: One shows Vernon Smith at the Wicket with a cigarette; he proceeds to knock up a century; it is only when he returns to the pavilion that the mystery is explained, the cigarette is of course a Maynards and eating the chocolate sustained and helped him with his wonderful score.

The second sports card has Wharton just beating Cherry at the finish of a gruelling foot race. Temple had prophesied that Wharton wouldn't be able to stay the course after smoking cigarettes which of course, were chocolate and helped the Remove captain to keep going and give him that extra spirit at the end.

The remaining cards have Penfold "putting on a cigarette" to stimulate thought whilst composing a poem. Dicky Nugent and Gally initiating a new boy by forcing him to "Smoke a Cigarette". Snoop

* Bunter spoofs Gosling on the cover.

receiving a punch on the jaw for inviting Bob Cherry to a smoking party after seeing him with a Maynard's cigarette in the Quad.

And finally Fisher T. Fish is shown in a good light, when he buys up a large quantity of Maynard's cigarettes and sells them at a fair price to the delighted fellows. The twelve picture titles are as follows. "Harry Wharton surprises the Head", "Billy Bunter Scores", "Billy Bunter Spoofs Gosling", "Bunter receives a Postal Order", "Bunter Bumped", "Raiding the Lockers", "The Bounder astonishes his clubmates", "Wharton's great finish in the Marathon", "Penfold the Poet makes a Ryme", "Initiation of the new boy", "Bob Cherry annoyed with Snoop", and "Fish at last makes good."

Under each picture was the information that: These characters appear each week in the Magnet Library.

BOOK REVIEWS - by Mary Cadogan

Chatto & Windus have had the bright idea of publishing, in full colour, a selection of the most attractive of the covers of their 6d. popular novels, published or republished between 1880 and 1914. This selection is featured in an extremely attractive book called SIXPENNY WONDERFULS: 6d. gems from the past (£5.95), and it makes fascinating, nostalgic browsing. There are cover illustrations to novels of mystery and suspense, high adventure and gripping romance produced by Victorian and Edwardian writers from George Manville Fenn to R. Austin Freeman, and from Ouida to Bret Harte. Unfortunately few of the artists names are given, although the work of all of them is excellent and enticing. There is an interesting commentary on the books which are illustrated, and there are also some lovely reproductions of the many advertisements for Pears' famous soap which appeared on the back covers of all these 6d. Wonderfuls.

Paperback reprints of novels of the nineteen-twenties and 'thirties continue to be issued by various publishers, and Dent's Classic Thriller series has come up with a new and appealing batch. My favourites from these are Edgar Wallace's THE FOUR JUST MEN £2.95 (with an introduction by 'Jack Adrian' who is a notable member of our collecting circle), and Sapper's THE FINAL COUNT, £3.50. Coming forward in time from the 'twenties and 'thirties the same series now includes a really spinechilling story of espionage and detection, THE SAD VARIETY, by Nicholas Blake, at £3.50, and a reprint of Margery Allingham's TRAITOR'S PURSE, which combines treachery, heroism and sleuthing, and has the bonus of an interesting introduction by the present-day detective-story writer, Jessica Mann.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH. The mind yearns after what is gone, and loses itself in dreaming of the past.



NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

CAMBRIDGE

On Sunday, 1st September the Club began its 1985-86 season with the traditional visit to the Sweffling home of Neville and Ruth Wood, who welcomed us with their usual warm greetings and lavish hospitality. The Club held a brief business meeting; in the absence of the chairman on holiday Edward Witten was in the chair. The Secretary reported that he had sent a card of sympathy to Mike Rouse on the death of his father.

The members then settled down to enjoy Ruth's lovely lunch, to which we did full justice. We then browsed for a while among Neville's book cases exploring the many additions made since our last visit. We then moved to the upper rooms and Neville first entertained us with an hilarious Tatti film extract; then switched to an account of a real life murder or murders (or possible murders) in 1928. He first briefed us with a list of characters and dates, including among the characters two famous names in Sir Archibald Bodkin, Director of Public Prosecutions, and the famous Pathologist, Sir Bernard Spilsbury. The setting was a house called Birdhurst Rise. He then went carefully through all the happenings that had occurred during the period from 23rd April, 1928 until the matter came to an end on 6th August, 1929. In this real case no charge was finally made against anyone, on grounds of insufficient evidence.

Neville finally left us to ponder on all the evidence, and to make our own decision as to the guilty party. He referred us to a book published a year or so ago on the mystery of Birdhurst Rise; the author of this had studied the case not too long after the affair, and interviewed all the living characters, and had received help from all except one. But his conclusions could not be published until after the death of that one character.

Tony Cowley followed this up with a highly entertaining film on Seaside postcards, and their main artist.

We then returned downstairs to enjoy Ruth's tea.

All good things must come to an end, and we finally departed with warm thanks to our host and hostess, having added one more happy memory to these joyous annual visits.

LONDON

The September meeting at the Leytonstone home of Phyllis Godsave has always been a very enjoyable one and the current one was no exception. Dahlias and fuchsia were only two of the resplendent display of flowers in the garden.

A warm welcome was accorded to Jim Cook, the eminent St. Frank's scholar, who is currently on a visit to England.

Bill Lofts gave a fine discourse on St. Frank's and Nelson Lee, and at its conclusion there was a discussion on the two subjects. Tributes were given to the great scholars of St. Frank's, the late Reuben Godsave and Bob Blythe. Also receiving tributes were Jim Cook and Bill Bradford, the latter for his sterling work as the club's Nelson Lee Librarian.

A St. Frank's quiz devised by Ben Whiter was won by Chris Harper. Duncan Harper exhibited his efforts on the club's scrap-book, and has done a fine job of work.

Ray Hopkins read a couple of chapters from Gem number 766 entitled "Trouble For Tompkins."

Memory Lane reading was from news-letter number 209, circa April 1970. Copies of the new Hamilton Library were available and are available from Roger Jenkins at a cost of two first class postage stamps.

Next meeting at the Liberal Hall, Ealing on Sunday, 13th October. Bring own tuck but tea will be provided. Winifred Morss proposed the hearty vote of thanks to Phyllis Godsave.

Ben Whiter

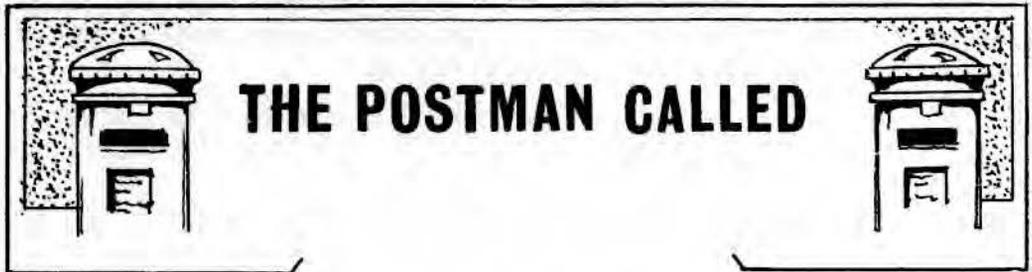
NORTHERN

Meeting held on Saturday, 14th September 1985

A LITERARY quiz by Joe Wood began our programme, in which we were given a number of characters and then had to state the book in which each one appeared and to give the author. Most of us know that Joe Lampton appeared in 'Room at the Top' and that the author was John Braine. The frustration came with the elusive title of a book we knew (or thought we knew) well'. Bill Williamson and Keith Smith tied with 20 out of 43 each.

And Keith Smith gave an introduction to his talk and book review which he is to give next month on the newly-published 'But for Bunter' by David Hughes. Keith gave us a list of some of the public figures of some forty or so years ago - Anthony Eden, Field Marshal Montgomery, Oswald Moseley et al. Could we pair them off with Greyfriars characters? Well, with a stretch of the imagination Anthony Eden could be Harry Wharton, Montgomery could be Bob Cherry and Nehru could be Hurree Singh... with a stretch of the imagination!

Then Geoffrey Good presented 'The Voluptuous Judith!'. Jack Allison had told us in the past that he regarded the Bible and Shakespeare as old boys' books. Here, said Geoffrey, was a story from the Bible (from the Apocrypha). It was a historic novel, its hero the beautiful, courageous (and virtuous) Judith, who by exercising all the wiles of woman, was able to destroy the Babylonian commander, Holophernes, and so save her nation from destruction. The story had all the elements of an 'X' certificate film, said Geoffrey, and would lend itself to a marvellous cinematic spectacle.



JOE CONROY (Liverpool) The illustration on the back page of William (August C.D.) is a real cracker. Thomas Henry is a great artist.

CLIFFE HOWE (Alberton, South Australia) I'm one of your boys. I dub it C.D. - THE RELIABLE. I appreciate your monthly work. It adds peace in a violent world.

BILL LOFTS (London) The 'Woman with the Black Heart Series' in Fun and Fiction was written by A. Donnelly Aitken who was also the editor. I knew him fairly well during the late fifties, and met him often down Fleet St. A Major in the First World War, he lost an arm, and I can well remember him typing out in his office with one finger details about all his writings and papers for my extreme

curiosity and thirst for details in those days. Editor of Chums 1918-20, he later became connected with George Newnes, and was on the editorial of Titbits. He died at Brighton in 1963 aged 70.

Trevor Wignall was a famous newspaper sports reporter, and poured out a lot of boys fiction in the twenties. Using his own name as well as 'Alan Dene' and 'David Rees'. As far as it is known he only wrote two Sexton Blake stories for the Library, but none in the Union Jack. Born at Swansea, he once courted when young my brother-in-laws mother who also came from the same area. Seemingly he read or collected the stories in his young days, as he gave a box of them to the family - but they were eventually lost in the moving around in the Midlands. Trevor Wignall after writing a famous 'Spotlight' column in The Daily Express for a number of years died at Hove. Sussex in 1958 aged 75.

JOE WILLIAMSON (Wangaratta, Australia) I enjoyed your editorial "So Long in the Tooth." I remember Hodder & Stoughton's paperbacks - only 9d or was it 7d? - a full-length novel with a lovely coloured cover. We didn't have much money in those days, but the reading material we had was far superior to what children can buy today. I wouldn't want to be a child again in today's age. And as for the pop groups - more like screaming than singing.

JAMES HODGE (Bristol) Appropos the final sentence of 'Notes on "Danny's Diary" in the current issue of CD: just for the record you may find the following of interest.

Fred Astaire's and Ginger Rogers' first film together was the 1933 production "Flying Down to Rio". The 'stars' of this film were Gene Raymond and Dolores del Rio -- but after seeing Astaire and Rogers dance "The Carioca" audiences forgot all about Raymond and del Rio"

Astaire and Rogers then 'starred' in their second film together, "The Gay Divorcee", 1934.

"Roberta" was the 1935 release, with Irene Dunne billed as its 'star' -- she sang that lovely song "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes". Despite the presence of Miss Dunne, most people who went to view the film did so to see Astaire and Rogers.

I'm sure I shall be only one of many "Know-alls" who proffer this gratuitous information --- but it goes to show how we, your readers, devour your every written word!.

THE THIRTY-NINE AND THEIR USAGE.

by REG MOSS

I have followed with considerable interest the comments of the Skipper and Ernest Holman on the top-heavy Remove.

Some months ago when considering the "Thirty-Nine" the thought came as to the average use of these names in an issue of the Magnet. Further; could all have been used in a single story, or at least in a series? This seemed an impossibility. But if so what in fact could have been the greatest number. Again, how few were used in a particular story. The result was that when reading a Magnet I began to note the names as they occurred.

I have now sufficient data to suggest that the genuine Frank Richards would have used an average of about eighteen names in a single Magnet story. This could increase to about twenty-five when the plot involved the vexed question of the selection of the Remove Cricket or Football Eleven. For obvious reasons more names were involved as the selection was debated with numerous candidates considered. Later some not even seriously considered would vent their indignation.

The substitute writers are naturally more uneven, but the majority seem to show an inclination to use more names. Perhaps an average in the early twenties. However, there are exceptions.

Now it so happened that for my next reading I chose the Howard Baker Volume No. 94 which consists of substitute stories. This reading has now been completed and I believe I have found the answer as to both the greatest and the least use of the "Thirty-Nine".

This volume contains the three issue mini-series of 1923, the "Willesley Twins". The first part, number 803, very soon showed that a considerable number of names would be used. In fact thirty-one. This was as high as I would have felt possible. However, 804 exceeded even this with thirty-four names. This Magnet had a flying start in that the Remove played a practice match with A to L against M to Z. The only names omitted from this second part of the "Twins" were Smith Minor, Alonzo Todd, Treluce, Trevor, and Wun Lung.

The concluding issue 805 used only nineteen names but it included Alonzo Todd for the first time in the series. So in the course of the mini-series only four names are not used. It is perhaps not surprising that the author was J.N. Pentelow.

There must be little prospect of finding a greater name usage, even in a major series. It is most unlikely that the real

Frank Richards would ever have used such a number. Surely only Pentelow with his passion for Characters would have gone so close to using the Thirty-Nine in entirety. It almost seems as if he had a check list beside him and ticked off the names as they were used.

Perhaps it is significant that those names not used in 804 are all from the latter part of the alphabet. Even Pentelow ran out of space before he could use them all. But at least in 805 Alonzo received a mention.

This volume from Howard Baker was to contain a further surprise. The very next Magnet in the volume, number 816 written by S.E. Austin, must have supplied the answer as to the least number of the Thirty-Nine used in a story. Only the Famous Five and Bunter were used.

So it would appear that presumably through mere chance the greatest number and the least number have been brought together in a collection and adjacent to each other. Needless to say I will be delighted if I am proved wrong: if an even greater number or a fewer number in a single issue or a series are drawn to my attention. I may be able to forget about recording the names as I read.

ME, TOO ' I ENJOYED "DOG WITH A BAD NAME."

writes Dennis M. Hilliard

I read your editorial in the August issue with very special interest. During a recent book safari I obtained 2 good copies of books I had not previously read by Talbot Baines Reed - "A Dog with a bad name" and "The Adventures of a Three-Guinea Watch". They were placed alongside my bed to be read on some future occasion - (they joined an ever increasing file which makes the bedside table groan).

However, your remarks opened up "A Dog with a bad name" and re-introduced me to the fine, easy writing which I recall from "Fifth Form at St. Dominics". The editorial chat was encouraging and the volume itself, (printed by The Religious Tract Society) was a pleasing one.

How I enjoyed the story! It really was fine despite its "staggering coincidences". Thank you for so eloquently sharing your enjoyment with the book. Now I must look for a copy of Desmond Coke's "Bending of a twig".

Thank you especially for the way in which you continue to serve

us through 'CD' - even in times of personal grief. Bless you for the joy of Danny's Diary.

I trust that you will continue well and able, secure in the affections of many to provide such a rare feast.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Mr. Hilliard's closing words bring comfort to the aged heart. Many thanks to this loyal reader.)

THE CAPTAIN

by EDWARD BALDOCK

Who among us has not experienced the thrill of expectancy at the arrival of the postman bearing a book-packet? There is an elation in such moments which seems never to lose its novelty, be one seventeen or seventy. We know from long practice and by every aspect that it is a book-packet. Are we not expecting it anyway, we know what it contains and can hardly wait to disinter the treasure and have the feel of it in our hands. It is a volume of that wonderful old journal, that doyen among boys' magazines, The Captain, which we had seen advertised at what appeared a reasonable price. And here it is lying before us in all the dignity and venerability of its eighty odd years, still as beloved as on its first appearance on that far-off day at the turn of the century.

On glancing through the pages of The Captain today it appears to me to be emblematic of an age now so distant and far away, both in time and manner, as to seem almost dreamlike and in many ways quite unreal; any relationship to present day standards and customs would be difficult to find. One realises how completely alien has become the world depicted therein to us who have our being in a synthetic age of computers, artificiality and doubtful morals. It is a fact of life that times change and habits adjust themselves to changing conditions and taste. Yet it is patently obvious to at least one old boy which is preferable.

Illustrious giants of boys' fiction stride through the pages of The Captain. In Volume (2), covering the period October 1899 - March 1900, one finds visits to the homes of, and interviews with, Jules Verne, J.M. Ballantyne and Manville Fenn; an article on Phil May, probably one of the most brilliant caricaturists of the late Victorian era. Then hints on association football and rugby by C.B. Fry, the famous Corinthian amateur, and 'How to Box' by Jem Mace Jr., son of the great late nineteenth century pugilist. Warren Bell certainly scaled the heights to obtain really first-class material for The Captain.

We are transported into the world of Greyhouse, into the presence of the great Wardour, captain of the school, a very sterling character indeed, (whose ultimate fate unhappily was a Boer bullet out in the Transvaal received while rescuing a fellow old boy of Greyhouse), and to a host of other well-drawn characters which made the Greyhouse tales so memorable. There is an originality and a refreshing simplicity permeating these stories, an uncomplicated world of black and white is admirably presented. Standards which are sacrosanct are the order of the day. One knows at once the 'good fellows', and the doubtful characters are still capable of 'doing the decent thing' under certain pressures of circumstance.

Stanley Warren Bell, the creator of Greyhouse and for a decade editor of *The Captain* is very much in evidence contributing a monthly forum under the pseudonym 'Old Fag' in which he tenders much sound and often humorous advice to young readers of either sex, for it seems that *The Captain* had a considerable following of girl readers also.

Once in a while works by Warren Bell do surface in second-hand bookshops and at book sales, though not as frequently as one would wish. A splendid introduction to his style is to be found in 'J.O. Jones, and how he earned a living'; this is a personal favourite, but of course all his output is uniformly readable.

Perhaps it was that *The Captain*, in seeking readership, aimed a little high in the social hierarchy which was then far more rigidly delineated than it has since become. Thus it did not reach the potential which possibly it might have done. Nevertheless in the realms of boys' fiction it was probably, alongside the *Boys' Own Paper* and *Chums*, one of the best journals ever produced for boys - and their fathers.

The life span of *The Captain* was comparatively short and reflected an age which has now passed into limbo. The Eton-jacketed schoolboy, the pith-helmeted outpost-of-Empire pioneer, the white man bringing law, order and a civilised standard of living to dark places the military and naval adventures, all very distant and seemingly archaic today. The standard set was high, the moral tone impeccable - and as refreshing. It will probably remain on record as being one of the best ever boys' magazines.

Gentlemen, I give you *The Captain* - Nulli secundi.

HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR C.D. ANNUAL YET?

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by

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and

Graham McDermott

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BOOTS

Musing By M.R. THOMPSON

Sitting by the fire, the armchair taking my full weight without complaint, I was reminiscing of the past i.e. the last meal I had half an our ago. As I sat back with a happy and contented look on my face, my eyes moved slowly away from the imitation coal lit up on the electric fire and rested on my feet, sprawled across the hearthrug. What service they have done me, both of them, I have no favourites. I really appreciate the way they have always stood up for me, through thick and thin, and you will agree we have atrocious weather at times. I have just bought them 2 pairs of fur-lined Boots. It is not their Birthday, it is just that I want to show them the kind and sincere thoughts I have towards them. If they are happy - then I am happy.

Now it is quite a recognised fact that Bob Cherry has big feet, but has he got the biggest feet at Greyfriars? Since this question rather bothers me, and until I know for certain, my thinking cap will

be well worn and threadbare.

We must, of course, leave out the teachers and staff since the measuring of their supporting bases would entail doing it in secret, and many problems arise as to how this would be done. One cannot very well freshly cement some door opening hoping that each of the aforesaid would, in turn, pass through after each cementing leaving the footprint to measure and the re-cementing up. I have concentrated on this problem and find no solution.

The following are I believe worthy of entry into the BIG FEET COMPETITION:

Bob Cherry,	Bolsover,	Bulstrode,
J. Bull,	Coker,	Vernon Smith.

The measurements must be from the tip of the big toe and the widest part of the foot. Corns and Bunions would definitely disqualify a person. Using my imagination I have come to the conclusion that Coker would be the winner - well ahead of the others. With such a large body above the ankles, a kind of carthorse in human form. His feet must be similar to Flappers and would help him considerably in deep sea diving should it be his calling when leaving Greyfriars.

After being in deep concentration for so long, I feel quite tired, my eyelids are becoming quite heavy. I'm afraid I can't fight it. I must have forty winks. Whoops! one eyelid has dropped.....;;;;

CHUCKLES

(From a C.D. Editorial of 21 years ago)

Early in the fateful year 1914 the Amalgamated Press launched a new coloured comic paper which they named Chuckles. In the view of the late Leonard Packman, this was the finest halfpenny coloured comic of them all.

Be that as it may, though the paper ran on placidly for ten years or so, it never seems to have caught completely the affection of the young idea. Perhaps it slipped between two stools. It was a trifle too advanced for the younger reader and possibly a trifle too unimaginative for the older reader. Today it is seldom mentioned. Copies are scarce but it seems that few people worry over the scarcity.

It is a question whether Charles Hamilton ever had much to do with contributing to its contents. I incline to view that he didn't. At the beginning, for a few months, there were stories of Greyfriars, mainly starring Dick Trumper and his friends. It is long since I saw an early copy so I cannot pass an opinion as to whether Hamilton sired them or not.

After the war there was a long series of stories of Belminster School by Harry Clifton. Though the series ran for a long time, each

individual yarn was very short indeed - just one page, including heading and illustration. That these tales are based on the Hamilton plan goes without question. I am told that, in one of the valuable books devoted to the work of the authors for the old papers, "Harry Clifton" is given as a pen-name of Charles Hamilton. If so, it's a new one to me. I feel fairly sure that he did not write the forty or so "Harry Clifton" tales in my collection.

Most remarkable of all, they were illustrated by Chapman, and Tubby Barrell of the series is a facsimile of Billy Bunter. In fact, the illustrations could all have been lifted willy-nilly out of the Magnet, though I am not suggesting that they were.

Down the years I have come on an early copy or two of Chuckles, but somehow they never lingered with me, though goodness knows what became of them. I have happy memories of Breezy Ben and Dismal Dutchy. These two characters, to the astonishment of the browser, turned up years later in full-page adventures in the Boys' Friend, of all places, in that paper's dying months, though whether they were newly drawn (as is unlikely) or reprints from the old Chuckles, I am not in a position to say with authority.

IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS.....

Here is a breakdown of prices as they were at the turn of the century:

Tobacco 2½d an oz., Cigarettes 5 a 1d., Beer 2d. a pint, Tea 10½d a lb., Sugar 1d. a lb., Bacon 2½d a lb., 4lb. loaf 3½d., Haircut 2d., Shave 1d., Kippers 1d. a pair, Potatoes 21b. a 1d., Matches 1d. 12 boxes, Milk 1d. a pint, Coal 15s. 6d. a ton, Jam 21b. jars 3d., Whisky 3s.4d. a bottle, Brandy 4s.3d. a bottle, Rum 3s.8d. a bottle, Gin 2s.9d. a bottle, Rent of 2-room house 1s.9d. a week, 4-room 4s.9d House and shop inclusive rates 5s.6d., Board and Lodgings 10s. a week, Emigration to America £3.10s. Cheap day rail excursions to the seaside were 5s. and 3s.6d. return. Public houses were open from 6 a.m. till 11 p.m.

OLD VICTORIAN - Copied from a clipping from an old paper. Source unknown.

THE 1985 C.D. ANNUAL

All being well, come December, the C.D. Annual will be winging its way to loyal and enthusiastic readers as it has done every Christmas season for nearly 40 years past. The order form for the Annual went out with the September issue of C.D. As usual, there is space on the order form for you to include your small announcement if you have something to sell or you wish to obtain something - or you merely wish to send your season's greeting to hobby friends. Your small ads in the Annual help to grease the works and keep the wheels turning.

Order early if you can. In these days of high costs it is not possible to print many extra copies to allow for latecomers.

LONDON OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

(Hamiltonian Library)

Owing to popular demand, a new and up-to-date catalogue of the Hamiltonian Library has been printed by the Museum Press and is now ready for distribution.

There are over 2000 Magnets, Gems, Populars, Schoolboys' Owns, and monthly Boys' Friends available for borrowing, all in original editions, and a number of them are Charles Hamilton's own copies kindly presented by his former housekeeper, Miss Hood.

Although postal charges have increased over the years, we have resolved to keep the loan charges much as they were in 1953 - 1p for a weekly paper and 2p for a monthly volume, for a two-month loan in both cases.

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